

Banshee

by DemonCat008

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Summary: Kara is a not-so-normal viking girl. She was found in a cave surrounded by dead dragons, and killed a Monstrous Nightmare when she was only two. Her best friend is Hiccup, but she can't even tell him her secret. But when she learns that he is different about dragons, will she tell him about her dragon half? (Hiccup/OC, because I don't like Hiccup/Astrid)

1. Chapter 1

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><p>They began to glow white, like her eyes, and the tattoo's detached from her skin, swirling around her until she was enveloped in blinding white light. When the light cleared, there was a mighty dragon in her place. A dragon even more dangerous than an Exterminator dragon or a Murderous dragon... A Banshee. She was large and majestic, with inky black skin, white eyes, and white wings. Her underbelly was white too. There was a jagged scar across her left eye. She roared and dove from the rock, soaring high into the clouds. She soared back to Berk, where she lived as a human.<p>

* * *

><p>"Where is Stoick?!"<p>

"_Gamla lombungr, sugandi toti tik madr_(1)." The teenaged girl growled in response. It was the same girl from earlier. The leader of the Hairy Hooligan clan, Stoick the Vast, put her in charge of training the men and women for fighting dragons. They refused to listen to her, claiming that an outsider shouldn't be given that much power, and that they already knew how to fight dragons. True, the girl hadn't been born into the Hairy Hooligan clan and they knew how to fight, but Stoick knew her well and trusted her. At the moment,

she was swearing them out for not listening.

"How dare you, Outcast!" Another man yelled. The girl fought not to look offended. She turned and stared out over the water.

"I realize I'm not from your people, but Stoick, your leader, entrusted me to train you." She said. She turned to glare at them. "Or are you just going to let the dragons take your food?"

"We don't need your help, meyla(2)." A man said, shoving past her. She scoffed.

"Bacraut(3)." She said. She walked away to find Stoick.

* * *

><p>After reporting the situation to Stoick, she made her way to the bar where she knew she'd find either Gobber or Hiccup. She entered and found Astrid instead.<p>

"Hey, Astrid." Kara said. Astrid looked up from her axe and nodded.

"Kara." She acknowledged. Kara sat across from her, slamming her forehead onto the table.

"I. Am. So. Tired." Kara groaned. Astrid quirked an eyebrow.

"Stoick the Vast put you in charge again?"

"And they refuse to listen! I know how to kill dragons better than they do and- ah!" Kara cut off as Snotlout clapped her shoulder.

"Hey Kara!" He said brightly. She glowered at him. "Am I interrupting something?"

"I was telling Astrid about how stupid adults are." Kara said.

"At least they let you fight dragons." Ruffnut said glumly.

"They found me in a dragon's cave and the first time I saw a dragon, I tore its head off. What do you expect them to do?" Kara said. Tuffnut laughed.

"Lock you up for being a freak?"

"I can tear your head off too, Tuff." Kara warned. She got up and stretched, allowing Fishlegs to take her spot. "I'm off to find Hiccup. Seen him?"

"Hiccup? You mean Stoick's kid?" Snotlout asked with a laugh. "Why would you be looking for him?"

"Because I have to ask him something, moron." She said. She walked away and out of the bar.

* * *

><p>"Oi, Hic, where are you?" Kara called, entering the blacksmith

stall.<p>

"Ah, Kara. Still looking for Hiccup I see." Gobber said. She hopped onto the table with a worried frown.

"It's getting dark out, and I still haven't found him!" She exclaimed. In that moment, a fireball hit the grass outside the stall. Kara sighed, then smirked.

"Go on then." Gobber said with a chuckle. Kara ran outside as she tied her hair back. A dragon flew overhead and Kara leapt, grabbing its neck. Swinging onto its back, she caught a sword that Stoick tossed to her and plunging it into the dragon's skull with a silent apology. The beast fell and Kara rolled off in time so she wouldn't be crushed/hurt.

"Gimme a boost!" Kara called to Spitelout. He held out his shield and she ran at it, leaping feet first and pushing off. She flipped backwards and grabbed another dragon. She drove the sword through its ribcage and leapt off, letting it take her sword with it. Kara landed near Stoick, who had Hiccup hoisted in the air.

"What have we got?" Stoick asked.

"Gronkles. Nadders. Zipplebacks. Oh, and Hoark saw a Monstrous Nightmare." A man reported.

"Any Night Furies?"

"None so far."

"Good." Stoick said. He looked to Kara. "Can you handle the Monstrous Nightmare?"

"I could when I was two, I can when I'm fifteen." She replied. She ran off in search for the Monstrous Nightmare. She found a Gronkle instead. She thought over the best way to kill a Gronkle.

"Okay... Heavy armor, fire power, only six shots." She whispered to herself. She dodged the six shots it sent at her and leapt. She grabbed a sword from the ground and plunged it into its mouth. It fell and she spat on its hind.

"A nadder?" She whined, ducking under its blast. She ran at it and skidded under the beast, drawing her blade through its stomach as she went. It fell and she huffed.

"Kara, help the other teenagers!" Stoick called. She saluted and stabbed the sword into the Nadder's head as she ran off.

* * *

><p>Hiccup watched the action take place.<p>

"_That's Kara. Most people call her Kara the Killer. She's the youngest person to be allowed to protect the village from dragons ever. It's rumored that she was found as a baby surrounded by dead dragons. The first dragon she saw, a Monstrous Nightmare, she ripped its head off. Do I believe that?_" Hiccup watched as Kara slid her sword along a Nadder's stomach as she slid smoothly underneath. She

turned and threw the sword into the skull of a Nadder, then ran to help the others on fire brigade duties. "_Oh yeah. She knows more about dragons than anyone. Not to mention..._"

There was an explosion behind her, surrounding her figure in flames. She ran her hand through her hair, releasing it from its confines, and shook her head. Hiccup shook his own to rid himself of the thought.

* * *

><p>"Astrid." Kara acknowledged as she grabbed a bucket. Astrid looked at her in confusion.<p>

"Shouldn't you be with Stoick?"

"He put me on Fire Brigade." Kara said. She lifted two buckets into the air and easily walked forward as if the heavy buckets weight nothing. She threw the water onto a fire as turned as there was another explosion. She and Astrid walked forward and the others joined them. Kara noticed Hiccup and threw him a smile. He smiled back and was then hooked by Gobber. Kara smirked.

* * *

><p>Okay, so there are some Norse curses in here. This is what they mean:_

_**1: **_Thou art morons, sucking at the teat of your bitch dog mother.

_**2: **_little girl

_**3: **_asshole

2. Chapter 2

Disclaimer : I don't own HTTYD

Just to clarify:

"thoughts"

normal

emphasis

Authors Note

* * *

><p>"Kara! We need you now!" Stoick yelled. She nodded and threw her buckets to Fishlegs before running off.<p>

* * *

><p>"One day I'll get out there. Because killing a dragon is everything around here." Hiccup thought. Nadders land, gathering

like seagulls around a seemingly vacant house. "_A Nadder head is sure to get me at least noticed._"

The Nadders clambered onto the building, tearing the roof and walls apart. Sheep poured out and scattered. Elsewhere, hippo-like Gronckles picked drying racks clean of fish and flew off like loaded pelicans.

"_Gronckles are tough. Taking down one of those would definitely get me a girlfriend_." A stealthy, snake-like dragon head peeked over a rooftop, breathing gas into a chimney. "_A Zippelback? Exotic, exciting. Two heads, twice the status._"

A second head poked through the door and lit the gas. It exploded. The two heads flew through the explosion, their necks zipping together to reveal a single body. It flew past Stoick as he climbed to the top of a catapult tower. Boulders were catapulted at the corraling Nadders... Just as a huge red dragon whipped past, spraying the base of the catapult with sticky fire.

"_And then there's the Monstrous Nightmare. Only the best Vikings go after those. They have this nasty habit of setting themselves on fire_." It emerged from the flames, climbing the catapult with a leering, toothy grin. And then Kara came in. She leapt over fire and scaled up after the fiery beast. She climbed towards its head. She spat on it's nose and it shook its head in confusion, the fire dissipating. Kara dropped onto its neck and snapped its horn off, using it to kill the Monstrous Nightmare. She used its dead body as a cushion as they hit the ground. She got to her feet and shook off the impact like nothing had happened. She then ran, parkoured off a roof, and grabbed a Gronkle mid flight.

Suddenly, a loud ballistic moaning streaked overhead. The catapult crew ducked. Hiccup, looking up from his work, reacted to the same sound.

"But the ultimate prize for us is the dragon no one here has ever seen. We call it the-"

"Night Fury! Get down!" A viking yelled. Vikings everywhere took shelter. The moaning sound built. Stoick looked skyward.

"Jump!" Stoick yelled. **KABOOM!** The Catapult exploded as though hit by an artillery shell... sending Stoick and the crew leaping for their lives.

"_This thing never steals food, never shows itself, and..._" The sound receded, leaving the crippled catapult in flames. "_...never misses. No one has ever killed a Night Fury. That's why I'm going to be the first._"

* * *

><p>Kara laid unconscious on the ground, having slammed her head on the ground a little too hard. When the Night Fury struck, she was on the Gronke. It was flying straight for the catapult when it exploded. She was flung from the Gronkle's back from the combined force of the pissed dragon and the explosion. She slammed her head on the ground and now she was sprawled akimbo on the ground.<p>

Stoick picked the injured girl up and carried her towards the blacksmith stall, where she would be protected.

"Gobber. Keep her back there with Hiccup." Stoick ordered. Gobber nodded and took the girl carefully.

"Oi, Hiccup! We have company!" Gobber said. Hiccup looked up from his work to see his injured friend.

"Kara?! What happened to her?" Hiccup asked.

* * *

><p>Gobber traded his hammer for an axe.<p>

** "***Man the fort, Hiccup, they need me out there!" Gobber pauses. Turns with a threatening glare. ** "Stay. Put. There.** You know what I mean. And help Kara."

Gobber then charged into the fray, hollering. A smirk crossed Hiccup's face. But first he would make sure Kara was alright. He grabbed a cloth and a bucket of water and began dabbing the blood on her forehead away. There was a shallow cut on her forehead, and Hiccup frowned. Then he basically screamed as Kara shot up and ran towards the door.

"Kara, you're not okay to fight!"

"Shuddup, Hic!" Kara yelled.

* * *

><p>Hiccup pushed his wheeled contraption through a wall of clustered Vikings. He weaved through the ongoing mayhem, as fast as his legs could carry him.<p>

** "***Hiccup, where are you going!"

** "***Come back here!"

"I know. Be right back!"

* * *

><p>The Nadders had cornered the house-full of sheep. They closed in, ready to spring upon them. Stoick suddenly appeared, hurling fish nets over them. The surprised Nadders were caught. Stoick and his men rushed in. A Nadder blasted a hole through its net. Stoick leapt onto it, clamping his thick arms around its head, forcing its jaws shut.<p>

"Mind yourselves! The devils still have some juice in them." Stoick said.

"Wait for six shots, then attack." Kara explained. She grabbed a sword and lodged it into the Nadder's stomach. She slashed open its stomach before stabbing it through the eye.

"Kara, what are you doing out here?!" Stoick yelled.

"I will not allow these stupid pests to hurt my people while I sit back and have my scratch attended to." Kara said, forcing her sword through a Nadders head. Her head shot up as she heard screaming. A second Monstrous Nightmare was chasing Hiccup.

"Stay here, I've got him. Kara, you're in charge." Stoick growled. Kara nodded. "Do ****not ****let them escape!"

"Alright men, you heard the man. Take these devils out." Kara said, killing yet another Nadder. Her pointed ear twitched and she swore. "Take over, I'm going after them!"

* * *

><p>Vikings scatter as Hiccup dodged a near fatal blast. The Nightmare was sticky, Napalm-like fire splashed up onto buildings, setting them alight. Hiccup ducked behind the last standing brazier - the only shelter available. The Nightmare blasted it, spraying fire all around him. Hiccup peered around the smoldering post. No sign of the Nightmare. He turned back to find it leering at him, blocking his escape. It took a deep breath. Hiccup was finished.<p>

Suddenly, Kara leapt between them and screamed at the Monstrous Nightmare. It blinked and stumbled back. She leapt at it and grabbed it neck. She kicked off its horn and leapt for it. The Nightmare shot fire at her and she screamed.

"Kara!" Hiccup yelled. When the fire cleared, Kara was standing there unscathed. She growled and grabbed the Nightmare, and with a final scream, she lodged the horn into its eye, into its brain. It collapsed and Kara was left shaken. She then collapsed to the ground in a faint.

******_Oh, and there's one more thing you need to know..._**" The burnt brazier pole collapsed, sending the massive iron basket crashing. It bounced down the hill, destroying as it went and scattering the Vikings who were holding down the netted Nadders. The freed dragons escaped... with several sheep in tow. "Sorry, dad."

The escaped Nadders flew past with sheep in their clutches. The raid was over. The dragons had clearly won. The murmuring crowd eyed Stoick, awaiting his response.

* * *

><p>"Okay, but I hit a Night Fury." Hiccup said. Stoick grabbed Hiccup by the back scruff of his collar and hauled him away, fuming with embarrassment. "It's not like the last few times, Dad. I mean I really actually hit it. You guys were busy and I had a very clear shot. It went down, just off Raven Point. Let's get a search party out there, before it-"

"-****Stop****! Just...stop." He released Hiccup. Everyone went silent, staring expectantly. ******Every time you step outside, disaster follows. Can you not see that I have bigger problems? Winter's almost here and I have an entire village to feed!**"

Hiccup looked around. All eyes were upon him.

"Between you and me, the village could do with a little less feeding,

don't ya think?" A few rotund Vikings stirred self-consciously.

"This isn't a joke, Hiccup! Why can't you follow the simplest orders?" Stoick said, exasperated.

"I can't stop myself. I see a dragon and I have to just... kill it, you know? It's who I am, Dad."

****You are many things, Hiccup. But a dragon killer is not one of them." Hiccup looked around to see many nods of agreement. "Get back to the house.

Make sure he gets there. And bring Kara. I have his mess to clean up." He added to Gobber. Stoick lumbered off in the opposite direction. Gobber picked the unconscious girl off the ground and led Hiccup through the walk of shame. They passed the teen fire brigade as they snicker.

****Quite the performance." Tuffnut said.

****I've never seen anyone mess up that badly. That helped!" Snotlout added.

****Thank you, thank you. I was trying, so..." Hiccup avoided Astrid's glare and headed up toward a large house, standing prominently on the hill above the others.

3. Chapter 3

"I really did hit one." Hiccup said.

"Sure, Hiccup." Gobber said.

"He never listens." Hiccup continued.

****Well, it runs in the family." Gobber remarked.

"And when he does, it's always with this... disappointed scowl. Like someone skimped on the meat in his sandwich." Hiccup mimicked Stoick. "Excuse me, barmaid. I'm afraid you brought me the wrong offspring. I ordered an extra large boy with beefy arms. Extra guts and glory on the side. This here. This is a talking fish bone."

****You're thinking about this all wrong. It's not so much what you look like. It's what's inside that he can't stand." Gobber said.

"Thank you, for summing that up." Hiccup said sarcastically. He opened the door and Gobber placed Kara on the ground inside.

"Look, the point is, stop trying so hard to be something you're not." Hiccup sighed heavily.

"I just want to be one of you guys." Hiccup said. Gobber eyed him sympathetically and left. Hiccup closed the front door. And ran straight out the back door. He hurried off into the woods, determined. Little did he know that Kara was awake again, and she was right on his tail.

* * *

><p>"Either we finish them or they'll finish us! It's the only way we'll be rid of them! If we find the nest and destroy it, the dragons will leave. They'll find another home." He sank his blade into a large map spread on the table. The blade pierced the middle of an uncharted corner, swirling with painted sea monsters and dragons. "One more search. Before the ice sets in."<p>

"Those ships never come back." A viking spoke up.

*****"We're Vikings. It's an occupational hazard. Now who's with me?" Stoick threw up his fist. No one followed. The crowds shifted in restless silence. Head scratches. Eyes averted. "Alright. Those who stay will look after Hiccup."

Hands jutted into the air, volunteers galore. Enthusiastic murmurs of prep and packing fill the room.

"To the ships!" Phlegma the fierce cheered.

** ***"I'm with you Stoick!" Spitelout added.

*****"That's more like it." The Vikings rushed for the door, leaving Gobber and Stoick alone. Gobber gulped back the contents of his tankard attachment and scraped back the bench.

"I'll pack my undies." Gobber remarked.

"No, I need you to stay and train some new recruits." Stoick said.

*****"Oh, perfect. And while I'm busy, Hiccup can cover the stall. Molten steel, razor sharp blades, lots of time to himself...what could possibly go wrong?" Stoick sank onto the bench beside Gobber, his brow burdened.

*****"What am I going to do with him Gobber?" Stoick asked.

"Put him in training with the others."

"No, I'm serious."

"So am I." Gobber responded. Stoick turned to him, glaring.

"He'd be killed before you let the first dragon out of its cage." Stoick said.

"Oh, you don't know that." Gobber said.

"I do know that, actually."

"No, you don't."

"No, actually I do."

"No you don't!"

"Listen! You know what he's like. From the time he could crawl he's

been...different. He doesn't listen." Stoick said. "Has the attention span of a sparrow. I take him fishing and he goes hunting for... for trolls."

"Trolls exist! They steal your socks." His expression darkened. "But only the left ones. What's with that?"

"When I was a boy..."

"Oh here we go." Gobble grumbled to himself.

"My father told me to bang my head against a rock and I did it. I thought it was crazy, but I didn't question him. And you know what happened?" Stoick asked.

"You got a headache." Gobber said.

"That rock split in two. It taught me what a Viking could do, Gobber. He could crush mountains, level forests, tame seas! Even as a boy, I knew what I was, what I had to become." He paused. "Hiccup is not that boy."

"You can't stop him, Stoick. You can only prepare him." Gobber paused, taking in Stoick's expression. "Look, I know it seems hopeless. But the truth is you won't always be around to protect him. He's going to get out there again. He's probably out there now."

* * *

><p>"I'm going to kill you, Dragon. I'm gonna cut out your heart and take it to my father. I'm a Viking." He paused. "I am a viking!"

Hiccup raised the dagger, determined to prove his Viking- ness. The dragon's labored breathing broke Hiccup's clenched concentration. He opened an eye, uncertainty leaking through. The dragon held the stare. Something profound was exchanged. Finally, the Night Fury closed its eye and lowered its head, resigned to its fate. Hiccup tried to go through with it, holding the dagger aloft... fighting himself... until finally lowering it with a frustrated sigh. He looked over the dragon's chaffed rope wounds.

Kara watched the whole exchange, curious. Her ears twitched as she listened to every little sound. She was concerned that Hiccup didn't take the chance, but also proud.

"I did this." He acknowledged, shame in his voice. He turned to leave... then paused. He glanced back at the dragon, chest heaving. Hiccup grumbled. He checked over his shoulder to ensure that no one is watching, and Kara ducked to make sure he didn't know of her presence... then he hurried back to cut the ropes. The Night Fury's eye shot open. With the dragon watching his every move, Hiccup hurriedly sawed through the bola ropes. As the last rope fell free, the Night Fury suddenly pounced.

In a blur, the dragon was upon him, pinning Hiccup down, grazing his neck. Looking like it was about to kill him. Hiccup was paralyzed. The dragon's breath ruffled his hair. Hiccup opened his eyes to find the Night Fury's wolf-like stare boring into him. The exchange was intense, profound.

Kara was perched on the rock Hiccup was pinned to in an instant. Hiccup was unaware of her, and so was the dragon. Kara was ready to kill the dragon if it dared to threaten Hiccup's life.

The dragon drew a deep breath, as though it was about to torch him... then Kara let out an ear-piercing scream. It screeched back and turned, taking flight, flapping violently through the canopy of trees. It bashed against a nearby mountain side, recovered, and dropped out of view some distance away. Winded, Hiccup struggled to his feet.

"Hic, are you okay?" Kara asked, leaping off the rock. Hiccup staggered a few steps.

"I'm... fine..." And he collapsed in a faint, into Kara. She caught him and sighed. She settled more comfortably on the ground and pursed her lips in thought.

Hiccup saved a dragon's life... would he save hers if she told him her secret?

4. Chapter 4

Hiccup and Kara entered Hiccup's home to see Stoick, seated on a thick slice of tree-trunk. He was slouched over the fire-pit, stirring the coals with his axe. Embers wafted around his beard. Hiccup and Kara tried to sneak past, up the stairs to his room. Stoick seemed none the wiser, when...

"Hiccup." Stoick said. Hiccup gestured that Kara should hide, and she continued climbing. Her ears picked up their conversation, and she peered down to watch.

"Dad. Uh..." Hiccup said nervously. Stoick stood and took a deep breath. "I, uh... I have to talk to you, Dad."

"I need to speak with you too, son." Hiccup and Stoick straightened at the same moment.

****"I've decided I don't want to I think it's time you learn fight dragons to fight dragons." They said at the same time, their sentence's morphed together. "What?"

****"You go first." Stoick said.

"No, you go first." Hiccup said.

"Alright. You get your wish. Dragon training. You start in the morning." Stoick told him.

"Oh man, I should've gone first. Uh, 'cause I was thinking, you know we have a surplus of dragon-fighting Vikings, but do we have enough bread-making Vikings, or small home repair vikings-"

"-You'll need this." Stoick handed Hiccup his axe. Hiccup avoided taking it.

"I don't want to fight dragons." Hiccup said.

"Come on. Yes, you do." Stoick said.

"Rephrase. Dad I can't kill dragons." Hiccup said.

"But you will kill dragons."

"No, I'm really very extra sure that I won't." Hiccup insisted.

"It's time Hiccup." Stoick continued

"Can you not hear me?" Stoick forced the axe into Hiccup's hands. Its weight dragged him down.

"This is serious son! When you carry this axe... you carry all of us with you. Which means you walk like us. You talk like us. You think like us. No more of..."He gestured non-specifically at Hiccup.**
"**... this."

"You just gestured to all of me." Hiccup said.

"Deal?" Stoick asked.

"This conversation is feeling very one-sided." Hiccup said, annoyed.

"**Deal?!**" Stoick repeated, louder. Hiccup glanced at the axe in his hands. It was a no-win argument.

"Deal." Hiccup agreed. Satisfied, Stoick grabbed his helmet and duffel bag... and headed for the door.

"Good. Train hard. I'll be back. Probably." Stoick said.

"And I'll be here. Maybe." Stoick headed out the door, leaving Hiccup holding the axe. Hiccup dropped it and climbed up to meet Kara, who met his eyes with a sad look.

"I'm sorry, Hic." She said. He only sighed.

"I can't do this." He said, panicked. She grabbed his hand with her surprisingly delicate fingers, causing him to look up in surprise. She smiled encouragingly.

"You'll be fine. If it makes you feel better, I'll get the dragons for you, so you don't have to fight." She said.

"Wait, you'll be there too?" Hiccup asked, confused. She nodded.

"Gobber wants me to help out. My challenge is to not hurt the dragons. But if worst comes to worse..." She sighed, her hand falling from his.

"How come you kill dragons?" Hiccup asked. "How is it so easy for you?"

"I..." Kara's eyes closed and her eyebrows furrowed. Her hand gripped her hair. "I can't say."

"Kara..." Hiccup said. She stood, determined.

"Meet me in the woods, tomorrow, after practice." She said. She then climbed down the stairs and left.

* * *

><p>"Welcome to dragon training!" The recruits filed through the gate, and out onto the arena floor. They took it in like gladiators entering the colosseum. The walls were covered in scorched silhouettes of blasted Vikings. It was a grim yet awe-inspiring place.

"No turning back." Astrid said.

"I hope I get some serious burns." Ruffnut said.

"I'm hoping for some mauling, like on my shoulder or lower back." Tuffnut said.

"Yeah, it's only fun if you get a scar out of it." Astrid added.

"Yeah, no kidding, right? Pain. Love it." The recruits turned to see Hiccup behind them.

"Oh great. Who let him in?" Tuffnut groaned.

"Let's get started! The recruit who does best will win the honor of killing his first dragon in front of the entire village." Gobber said.

** "*** Hiccup already killed a Night Fury, so does that disqualify him or...?" Snotlout said. The recruits laughed.

****"Can I transfer to the class with the cool Vikings?" Tuffnut said.

"Real cute, Tuff." Kara remarked, strutting into the arena. The others stared at her in surprise. She already knew how to fight dragons, why was she here. Kara threw a supportive arm around Hiccup and ushered him along.

****"Don't worry. You're small and you're weak. That'll make you less of a target. They'll see you as sick or insane and go after the more Viking-like teens instead." Gobber said. Kara stuck him in line with the others and continued on toward five massive reinforced doors with Gobber. Terrible roars and bellows issued from within.

** "***Behind these doors are just a few of the many species you will learn to fight." Kara said. Yeah, that's why she was there. To help teach. Fishlegs bounced and giggled with excitement, barely able to contain himself. ****"The Deadly Nadder."

"Speed eight. Armor sixteen." Fishlegs said.

** "***The Hideous Zippleback." Gobber added.

"Plus eleven stealth. Times two."

****The Monstrous Nightmare." Kara said.

"Firepower fifteen."

"The Terrible Terror."

** ***Attack eight. Venom twelve."

**"Can you stop that?!*" Gobber yelled.

****And...the Gronckle." Kara continued, giving Gobber a look as he collected himself.

****Jaw strength, eight." Fishlegs said. Gobber pulled a lever, raising the cross beam on the last of the doors.

** ***Whoa, wait! Aren't you gonna teach us first!?" Snotlout yelled.

** ***I believe in learning on the job. Kara, don't kill it!" Gobber said.

"Aww, but that takes the fun out of it!" Kara said, prepping herself.

A Gronckle thundered out of its cave, charging into the ring like an irated rhino. The recruits scrambled in every direction. Except for Ruffnut and Tuffnut, who rushed toward it like pumped-up rodeo clowns.

** ***Today is about survival. If you get blasted, you're dead." Kara said, sliding under the Gronckle as it charged her.

"Quick, what's the first thing you're going to need?" Gobber asked.

** ***A doctor?"

** ***Plus five speed?"

** ***A shield." Astrid said.

** ***Shields. Go." The recruits scrambled for shields, finding them scattered around the ring. Kara watched.

"Your most important piece of equipment is your shield. If you must make a choice between a sword or a shield, take the shield." Hiccup struggled to lift his. Kara helped him and sent him running. Ruff and Tuff stood amidst a dozen shields. But only one had a skull painted on it. They both grabbed it.

** ***Get your hands off my shield!" Tuff yelled.

** ***There are like a million shields!" Ruff snapped.

** ***Take that one, it has a flower on it. Girls like flowers." Ruffnut used the shield to bash Tuffnut in the face. He didn't let go.

** "***Oops, now this one has blood on it." The Gronckle took aim at the distracted twins and fired. The shield was blasted out of both of their hands. Tuff and Ruff spun like tops and went down.

"Tuffnut, Ruffnut, you're out!" Kara yelled.

"What?!" The Gronckle scooped up a pile of rocks and swallowed them. The teens gathered on the far side of the ring.

** "***Those shields are good for another thing. Noise. Make lots of it to throw off a dragon's aim." Kara said. The kids scooped up weapons and began hammering on their shields. The Gronckle shook its head at the clatter. "Bonus point: What's the only dragon unaffected by noise?"

"Banshee Dragons!" Fishlegs called.

"Extra point to Fishlegs!" Kara called.

"All dragons have a limited number of shots. How many does a Gronckle have?"

** "***Five!" Snotlout shouted.

** "***No, six." Fishlegs corrected.

** "***Correct, six. That's one for each of you!"

** "***I really don't think my parents would**-" ** BAM! Fishlegs had his shield blasted away.

** "***Fishlegs, out." Gobber spotted Hiccup hiding from the Gronckle's molten slugs. "Hiccup, get in there!"

Astrid bounced on her heels, ready to dodge a blast. Snotlout appeared, trying to hit on her.

** "***So anyway I'm moving into my parents' basement. You should come by sometime to work out. You look like you work out-" She cartwheeled out of the way, allowing a shot to shoot past her and hit Snotlout's shield. He was blasted onto his back.

** "***Snotlout! You're done!" Kara yelled. Astrid rolled to a stop beside Hiccup, who stirred awkwardly, trying to look cool.

** "***So, I guess it's just you and me huh?" Hiccup said.

"No. Just you." Astrid rolled away. A split-second later a lava slug knocked Hiccup's shield clear off of his arm. Hiccup was exposed.

** "***One shot left!" Gobber announced. Hiccup panicked and chased after his shield as it rolled across the ring. The sudden movement sent the Gronckle chasing after him, leaving Astrid in the clear.

** "***Hiccup!" Kara yelled, frightened. The Gronckle drove straight toward Hiccup, pinning him against the wall. It opened its mouth and cocked its tail, ready to fire point-blank. Kara lunged in and took the hit herself. She was unaffected, much to everyone's confusion yet relief, but she passed out in Hiccup's lap.

*****And that's six!" Gobber said. Gobber wrestled the irate Gronckle back into his pen. "Go back to bed, ya overgrown sausage! You'll get another chance, don't you worry.

"Remember... a dragon will always, always go for the kill." Gobber said, fixing Hiccup with a stern look. Gobber turned and walked away. Hiccup stared at the girl in his lap, shaken and grateful.

5. Chapter 5

Kara sat at the dining table with the others, a hand pressed to her stomach in pain. She had no appetite. When she woke up, she had told Hiccup to show up a different time. She couldn't pull off a double transformation today, not after taking a hit a point-blank like that.

A storm was brewing outside. The great doors rattled on their hinges.

"Alright. Where did Astrid go wrong in the ring today?" Gobber asked.

"I mistimed my somersault dive. It was sloppy. It threw off my reverse tumble." Astrid said.

*****Yeah. We noticed." Ruff remarked sarcastically. Snotlout grabbed Astrid's hand.

"No, no, you were great. That was so 'Astrid'." He said. She took her hand back.

"She's right, you have to be tough on yourselves." All eyes turned to Hiccup, entering the hall, sheepishly. Gobber glared at him. "Where did Hiccup go wrong?"

"He showed up."

"He didn't get eaten." Hiccup tried to sit, but the recruits keep closing the gaps. Rolling his eyes, Hiccup sat at the vacant table next to them.

"He's never where he should be." Kara glared at the group and stood, walking to sit next to Hiccup.

"Thank you, Astrid." Gobber said. He stood. Gobber laid a giant book in the center of the table. "You need to live and breathe this stuff. The dragon manual. Everything we know about every dragon we know of. No attacks tonight. Study up."

"You've gotta be kidding." Tuff said, watching Gobber exit into the storm. "Wait, you mean read?"

"While we're still alive?" Ruff added.

"Why read words when you can just kill the stuff the words tell you stuff about?"

"Oh! I've read it like, seven times. There's this water dragon that

sprays boiling water at your face. And there's this other one that buries itself for like a week..." The teens stared as Fishlegs went on too long.

"Yeah, that sounds great. There was a chance I was going to read that..." Tuff said.

** "***...but now..." Ruff continued, standing with her brother. Snotlout got up to go.

"You guys read, I'll go kill stuff." Snotlout said. The others followed, with Fishlegs in tow.

"Oh and there's this other one that has these spines that look like trees..." Astrid was the last to go.

"So I guess we'll share-" Hiccup was cut off by Astrid.

***"Read it." She pushed it toward him and left.

"All mine then. Wow, so okay. I'll see you**-" **The door slammed. He sighed.** "***Tomorrow."

"How come you like her so much?" Kara asked, sitting on the table and picking the book up to look at the cover. "I mean, she's kind of a _bacraut._"

"No she isn't." Hiccup said. Kara gave him a look.

"Hic, she's constantly insulting you because you make mistakes."

"Everyone does." Hiccup said. Kara snarled and slammed the book down.

"Yeah, _everyone_." She said. She stormed out, her fury matching the storm overhead. She ran into the woods, her tattoo's beginning to glow. She leapt into the air and roared, shifting in a short but blinding flash of light. She took to the air, easily cutting through the air. She landed on a perch in the middle of the ocean, and she screamed.

* * *

><p>Hiccup opened the massive book. Thunder boomed outside. The hall was vacant and dark, but for the few candles he's pulled together. Hiccup poured through page after page of strange and frightening dragons.<p>

** "***_Dragon classifications. Strike class. Fear class. Mystery class._" Hiccup turns the page.

"_Thunderdrum. This reclusive dragon inhabits sea caves and dark tide pools. When startled, the Thunderdrum produces a concussive sound that can kill a man at close range. Extremely dangerous. Kill on sight._" Hiccup's eyes drifted to a lurid illustration of decapitated Vikings. Another page, another dragon.

_ "Timberjack. This gigantic creature has razor sharp wings that can slice through full grown trees...extremely dangerous. Kill on

sight."_ The illustrations seemed to take on a life of their own, shifting and squirming in the candlelight.

"_Scauldron. Sprays scalding water at its victim. Extremely dangerous._" The storm outside raged against the shuttered windows. Hiccup was startled, but pressed on.

"_Changewing. Even newly hatched dragons can spray acid. Kill on sight._" He began flipping through the pages. A blur of dragons... "_Gronckle. Zippleback. The Skrill. Bone Knapper. Whispering Death. Burns its victims. Buries its victims. Chokes its victims. Turns its victims inside-out. Extremely dangerous. Extremely dangerous. Kill on sight. Kill on sight. Kill on sight..._"

Hiccup finally landed upon the page he'd been looking for.

"Night Fury." It's blank - no image, save for a few, sparse details. _"__Speed unknown. Size unknown. The unholy offspring of lightning and death itself. Never engage this dragon. Your only chance, hide and pray it does not find you."_

Hiccup pulled his sketchbook out of his vest and opened it to his drawing of Toothless. He laid it over the book's blank page and considered it.

His head shot up as he heard a pained scream. It was a dragon. He had never heard the sound before, but his eyes welled with tears. The scream was so powerful, so emotional... it was a Banshee, he knew it. Hiccup wiped his eyes and began to flip through the book for the Banshee. He found the page and read aloud.

"Banshees... Speed unknown. Size unknown. Usually black or white. Is generally majestic and beautiful... Moves with grace... Extinct, except for one... Never engage... Your only chance, hide and pray it does not find you... Banshee's are even more dangerous than Murderous and Exterminator dragons combined... A Banshee will kill for fun, and can kill with ease... Uses it's piercing screams to paralyze its victims... Can use anything in its surroundings to kill... Banshee's can become human-" Hiccup slammed the book closed and rubbed at his eyes. "And now I'm going to bed."

There was a knock on his door before he could retire. He opened it to see a soaking wet Kara.

"Can I talk to you?" She asked. Hiccup stared at her for a moment. Then he shook his head and gestured for her to enter. She sat by the fire and stared into the blaze. It was something about the way she carried herself that reminded him of the passage he had read. _Is generally majestic and beautiful... __Moves with grace..._

"So, what is it?" Hiccup asked. But then he realized that Kara had fallen asleep. He grabbed a blanket and placed it over her shoulders. "Good night."

6. Chapter 6

***You know, I just happened to notice the book had nothing on Night Furies. Is there another book? Or a sequel? Maybe a little Night Fury pamphlet?" BAM! A blast took the axe head off of Hiccup's

hilt, leaving a smoking hole behind him. Hiccup yelped and ran.

*****Focus Hiccup! You're not even trying." Gobber yelled. A Deadly Nadder was loose in a maze-like arrangement of moveable walls. Gobber and Kara called orders from above, Gobber standing outside and Kara clutching onto the upper caging.

"Today is all about attack." Kara said. The Nadder hopped from wall to wall, sending the recruits scurrying.

"Nadders are quick and light on their feet. Your job is to be quicker and lighter." Gobber teens moved in, stumbling over Hiccup and his unwieldy shield. The Nadder spotted Fishlegs' ample rear hiding behind a wall. It whipped its tail of spikes. Fishlegs screamed and lifted an entire wall to shield himself from the spray.

"I'm really beginning to question your teaching methods." Fishlegs said. Kara laughed.

*****Look for its blind spot. Every dragon has one. Find it, hide in it, and strike." Kara said. Ruff and Tuff rushed in, diving and rolling up to the Nadder's nose. The Nadder sniffed the air - it couldn't see them. Tuff and Ruff were smashed together, too close for comfort.

"Do you ever bathe?" Ruff hissed.

** ***If you don't like it, then just get your own blind spot." Tuff said.

"How about I give you one!" Ruff yelled. Ruff and Tuff shoved each other, till their movement and noise gave them away. The Nadder attacked, snapping at both of them.

"Blind spot? Yes. Deaf spot? Not so much." Kara laughed, hanging upside down from her legs. Hiccup wanders up to Gobber, while the others dart past.

"Hey, so how would one sneak up on a Night Fury?" Hiccup asked.

"No one, except Kara, has ever met one and lived to tell the tale. Now get in there." Gobber said, shoving him back in.

"I know, I know, but hypothetically..."

"Hiccup!" Astrid hissed. She put her finger to her lips and gestured for him to hide. A moment later, the Nadder leapt over the walls, surprising them by landing in front of her. Astrid somersaulted into its blind spot, confusing it. She reared back to strike - just as Snotlout leapt, protectively sweeping Astrid behind him.

"Watch out babe. I'll take care of this." he said.

"Hey!" Astrid exclaimed. Snotlout MISSES. Astrid glares at him.

*****The sun was in my eyes, Astrid. What do you want me to do, block out the sun? I could do that, but I don't have time right now!" Kara rolled her eyes and scaled along the chain ceiling. The Nadder tore

off after Astrid, knocking down walls in pursuit. She leapt and dove like a highly trained gymnast. Hiccup wandered up to Gobber again.

"They probably take the daytime off. You know, like a cat. Has anyone ever seen one napping?" Hiccup asked.

"Hiccup!" Gobber exclaimed.

"-Hiccup!" Hiccup spun around to see the maze walls collapsing like dominos toward him. Astrid came flying through the dust and crash-landed on top of him, laying him out in a limb-tangled mess.

"Oooh! Love on the battlefield!" Tuff laughed.

"She could do better." Ruff remarked. The Nadder closed in, emerging through the cloud of dust. Hiccup struggled to detach himself from Astrid.

"Just... let me... why don't you..." The Nadder spun around and raced back toward them like a Raptor. Astrid untangled herself and tried to pull her axe from Hiccup's shield... which was attached to his limp, gangly arm. She planted her foot on his torso and yanked the axe free, still burrowed into the shield. Astrid spun and swung the axe and shield, scoring a direct hit on the oncoming Nadder's nose. It yelped and scurried off.

"Well done, Astrid." Gobber said. Kara flipped from the ceiling and wrestled the Nadder back into his cave. Hiccup got to his feet - all eyes were upon him. He turned to find Astrid glaring at him, winded.

"Is this some kind of a joke to you? Our parents' war is about to become ours. Figure out which side you're on." She grabbed her axe and stomped off. Hiccup watched, stung. Kara came to stand next to him.

"C'mon, let's get out of here." She said, placing a hand on his shoulder. He sighed and shouldered her off, walking off and leaving Kara with a hurt expression.

* * *

><p>Hiccup tossed a fish into the cove. It hit the ground and slid. A moment later, Hiccup peeked through a gap in the rock, looking around cautiously. Nothing. Hiccup squeezed through and entered the cove. Kara perched on the rocks, resting her chin on her hand. A beat, then Hiccup heard a snort from behind him. Hiccup turned to see the Night Fury, crouched on a rock like a stealthy panther. It descended, approaching him... ready to pounce. Hiccup swallowed his fear and offered the fish. Doing so revealed the dagger at his waist. The dragon saw it and hissed. Hiccup reached for it, eliciting a growl. He paused, carefully lifted it by the handle, and tossed it away. The dragon calmed. As it approached the fish, Hiccup noticed that it was missing teeth.<p>

***Huh. Toothless. I could've sworn you had..." A set of razor sharp teeth emerged from its gums to grab the fish. Toothless snatched and gnashed it up, swallowing it. "... teeth."

The teeth retracted again. Toothless pressed closer with an expectant look. Hiccup retreated nervously.

** "***Uh, no. No, I don't have any more." The Fury backed Hiccup against a rock, placing himself the same position as before. The dragon closed in over him, staring blankly. A tense moment passed... then Toothless regurgitated a chunk of fish onto Hiccup's lap. They exchanged stares while Kara hid a snicker. Hiccup realized what Toothless wanted him to do. Hiccup crouched slowly and squeamishly picked it up. The dragon waited expectantly. Hiccup gagged and gnawed off a bite of the slimy fish. He forced a smile. Toothless mimicked him. Amazed, Hiccup sat up and tried to touch him. Toothless hissed and flapped off to a crash on the other side of the cove. He blasted the mossy ground to a red-hot temperature... and curled up on it like a giant dog. He turned to find Hiccup seated beside him. Toothless tolerated his persistent presence... until Hiccup tried to touch his damaged tail. Toothless snapped at him. Hiccup took the hint and left.

"Grab the fish." Kara said. Hiccup frowned and picked it up. He threw it at her and she caught it with her teeth. Hiccup paused as he saw that they were razor sharp. Why hadn't he ever noticed that before? She ate the rest of the raw fish and then skipped away, leaving a very baffled boy behind.

7. Chapter 7

Toothless woke, hanging upside down from a tree. He spotted Hiccup sitting on the other side of the cove, sketching in the sand with him, observing the sketch of Toothless. Hiccup drew with a stick, minding his own business. Toothless appeared behind him, watching carefully. Aware of his presence, Hiccup continued, trying not to scare him off. Toothless walked off. A moment later, he reappeared with an entire sapling, drawing lines in the sand. He rushed here and there, making haphazard lines in every direction. Finally, Toothless dropped the tree and inspected his work. He seemed pleased.

Hiccup stood and took in the sprawling scribble, amazed by it. He accidentally stepped onto one of the lines, eliciting an instant growl from Toothless. He stepped on it again. Toothless growled again. Realizing how sensitive he was, Hiccup stepped carefully between each line, turning round and round until he unwittingly bumped into Kara. Toothless snorted. Hiccup turned. Once again, they were face to face. Hiccup slowly extended his hand. Toothless hesitated. Hiccup turned his head away and closed his eyes. To his amazement, Toothless bridged the gap and pressed his muzzle against Hiccup's hand. In a flash, the dragon was gone, leaving Hiccup astounded.

* * *

><p>Gobber and the recruits were seated at the top of an abandoned catapult tower, toasting campfire food around a roaring bonfire.<p>

"...and with one twist he took my hand and swallowed it whole. And I saw the look on his face. Can't deny it, I was delicious. He must have passed the word, because it wasn't a month before another one of

them took my leg." Gobber said.

"Isn't it weird to think that your hand was inside a dragon. Like if your mind was still in control of it you could have killed the dragon from the inside by crushing his heart or something." Fishlegs said.

"I swear I'm so angry right now. I'll avenge your beautiful hand and your beautiful foot. I'll chop off the legs of every dragon I fight, with my face." Snotlout said. He postured to Astrid. She rolled her eyes.

"Un-unh. It's the wings and the tails you really want. If it can't fly, it can't get away. A downed dragon is a dead dragon." Gobber said. Hiccup hid his horrified look from the others. Gobber stood and stretched. "Alright. I'm off to bed. You should be too. Tomorrow we get into the big boys. Slowly but surely making our way up to the Monstrous Nightmare. But who'll win the honor of killing it?"

"It's gonna be me. It's my destiny. See?" Tuffnut rolled up his sleeve to reveal a red dragon on his arm.

"Your mom let you get a tattoo?" Fishlegs gasped.

"It's not a tattoo. It's a birthmark." Tuff said.

"Okay, I've been stuck with you since birth, and that was never there before." Ruff said.

"Yes it was. You've just never seen me from the left side until now." Tuff said.

"It wasn't there yesterday. Is it a birthmark or a today-mark?" Snotlout said. Kara noticed Hiccup leave, and she noticed Astrid notice Hiccup leave.

"It's not a tattoo!" Tuff said.

"That's definitely a tattoo. I have tattoo's myself, I know one when I see one." Kara said.

"Whoa, you have a tattoo?!" Fishlegs said.

"Multiple." Kara said. She gestured to her stomach and shoulders.

"When did you get those?" Snotlout asked, reaching to poke her stomach tattoo in awe. She slapped his hand away.

"I've always had them. You never noticed?" She asked. They shook their heads. "That just goes to show your observational skills. I'm heading home."

* * *

><p>Kara walked towards the hidden cove in search of Hiccup. She heard yelling, then a huge splash. She ran and found Hiccup and Toothless in the lake, laughing. Kara leapt the rocks and ran over.<p>

"Hiccup?!" She said. He looked to her with a grin.

"Hey Kara! What's up?" He beamed. She smiled with a laugh. She noticed the eel next to her and hissed, leaping away. She neared the dragon and the boy and shook her head with a laugh.

"Do you need help out?" She asked. Hiccup extended a hand and Kara grabbed it... only to be pulled into the water. She resurfaced and busted out laughing. She splashed Hiccup who blocked the splash. Toothless batted his wings and doused the both of them, who laughed even harder. They calmed and stared at each other. Then Kara looked away, blushing. "C'mon, we have practice today."

* * *

><p>"Today is about teamwork. Work together and you might survive." Kara called. She turned to Gobber. "Hey, mind if I take the day off?"<p>

"Is everything alright?"

"Yeah, just really tired." She said. He nodded and shooed her off. Kara ran off. Once alone, she shifted to become her dragon half and took off with a cry. The cry wasn't necessary, but she knew it would freak the students out.

* * *

><p>Kara curled up in the hidden cove. Toothless paid her no mind, in fact, he seemed to enjoy her company. They kept to themselves mostly. Kara shifted back at one point and walked to Toothless. He sniffed her hand, and recognized her. She sat next to him and leaned against his side. She sighed and Toothless grumbled.<p>

"You said it, Tooth." She said. She talked to the dragon for awhile, mostly just venting. Her eyes drifted shut and she fell asleep.

* * *

><p>Hiccup entered the cove with a new tail fin for Toothless, and was surprised to find Toothless randomly laying on the ground with his wings curled around him. Toothless looked up and moved his wings to reveal that he was huddled around Kara. She was fast asleep, a peaceful look upon her face. Hiccup placed the fin contraption on the ground and cautiously moved forward. He knelt next to Kara and looked over her face. There was a tiny smile on her face, and Hiccup smoothed a strand of hair from her face. Toothless grunted.<p>

"Huh?" Hiccup said. Toothless looked to Hiccup's stick drawing, then to Kara, then to Hiccup. "Draw her? Why would I-"

Toothless looked him in the eye. Hiccup was surprised. Did the dragon know something?

* * *

><p>-Earlier-

"I just don't get it, Tooth." Kara said. The Night Fury

grunted.

"Hiccup acts like we're best friends one second, then gives me the cold shoulder whenever Astrid is around. I mean, why does he like her so much? Sure, she's cute, but she's a complete _beiskaldi_(1) to him." Toothless grunted again. Kara blushed. "I don't like him! We're best friends, and... you're right."

Toothless grumbled and Kara rolled her eyes.

"Dragon mating rituals don't work with humans, Tooth." He grumbled. "No, I haven't told him about my... condition. I mean, he saved you, but I'm a Banshee, and I lied to him."

Tooth huffed and grumbled. Kara stared at him.

"I don't think if I told him that he'd welcome that so openly. I mean, have you ****read**** what they say about Banshee's? I'm nothing but a cold-hearted killer." Toothless grumbled for almost a minute straight. Kara looked miserable. "I don't know if I should tell him."

Toothless growled, almost threateningly. Kara closed her eyes.

"It's the only thing I can do: Lie. I'm not proud of it, but I need to. Think of what Stoick would do to me! Gobber, the students, the vikings... they'll all try to kill me." Tooth almost hummed. Kara smiled with an amused huff. "You're right. Hiccup won't."

Tooth grunted hopefully. Kara shifted to get more comfortable.

"Fine, fine, I'll do something. Happy?" Tooth grunted.

* * *

><p>"What do you know?" Hiccup wondered.<p>

* * *

><p>1: ****Bitch**

8. Chapter 8

Kara's eyes fluttered open as a grunt rumbled through the chest of the dragon that enveloped her. She looked to see that Hiccup was sketching something, sitting a distance from the girl and his dragon.

"Hic?" Kara mumbled, rubbing at her eyes. Hiccup looked up from his sketch and stuttered in surprise, face heating up.

"Oh, Kara! You're awake!" Hiccup exclaimed, obviously nervous. Kara looked curious.

"What are you drawing?" She asked, getting up. Toothless released her and she walked over to Hiccup, reaching for the sketchbook. Hiccup held it away. Kara smirked. She tackled Hiccup and sat on him, casually flipping through the sketchbook. "Hey, these are pretty

good..."

She trailed off as she saw his most recent sketch. It was her and Toothless. It was...

"Wow..." Kara breathed, examining the details of the sketch. She then closed the book and slapped it down near his head. She leaned down and pressed her lips to Hiccup's, surprising the teen. She then stood and ran away.

"Kara, where are you going?" Hiccup called. Kara kept running. Hiccup looked to Toothless in confusion. Toothless only closed his eyes and rested his head on the ground. When Toothless opened his eyes, Hiccup appeared before him holding the new prosthetic. Toothless ran off as Hiccup chased him down. "Hey!"

* * *

><p>"Yeah!" Toothless and Hiccup were zooming over the ocean. The tail broke free sending Hiccup flying. "Whoa!"<p>

* * *

><p>Hiccup and Toothless zipped through the air - his rudimentary harness and tail controls were working, barely. They crash-landed in an open field. Hiccup recovered to find Toothless still rolling around in the tall grass. Hiccup discovered that it's a patch of Æðdragon-nip.' Toothless writhed on his back, tongue wagging, in complete bliss.<p>

* * *

><p>Hiccup discovered new tricks over the next week or two. Kara stopped showing up to training, much to Hiccup's and Gobber's concern. Hiccup strapped a newly designed harness onto Toothless. With Toothless tied to a nearby post with a rope, Hiccup rode him in the air - while stationary. Toothless looked like a giant kite tied to a tree stump. This harness seemed to work. The rope the broke and the pair crashed into a tree. Hiccup's face was red.<p>

"Oh, great." He mumbled. Kara laughed from a far rock pile and walked over.

"Good going, Hic." She said. She knelt down and rubbed Toothless' muzzle. He purred and relaxed. Hiccup looked curious as to how she accomplished to make Toothless so calm, and she revealed that she had dragon nip in her palm.

"Where'd you get that?" He asked. She frowned and dropped it.

"Nowhere important." She said, standing. Hiccup, grabbing the dragon nip, grabbed it up and looked at her.

"This came from a field way out in the middle of nowhere... how did you get out there?" Hiccup asked. Kara gave him a look that said 'drop it'. But Hiccup being Hiccup, he didn't. He walked forward and held the dragon nip up to her face. She held her breath and glared at his hand, before swatting the dragon nip to the ground. She turned and walked away.

* * *

><p>Hiccup and Toothless lounged on a sprawling, deserted beach, snacking of freshly caught fish. As Hiccup cooked his over a fire, Toothless suddenly regurgitated a fish head. Hiccup smirked with forced politeness.<p>

** "***Uh..no thanks." Hiccup gestured to his fish on a stick.
"*I'm good."

Several Terrible Terrors landed like seagulls, hissing and nipping at each other as they approached Toothless' pile of fish. One grabbed the regurgitated fish head and dragged it away. Another attempted to steal it from him. They faced off and blasted fire balls at each other to settle the fight. Hiccup and Toothless watched, amused. That is until Toothless spotted one of his fish leaving the pile. A stealthy Terrible Terror was exposed as the thief. They tugged on the fish, and it snapped back into Toothless' mouth. He swallowed it back tauntingly.irate, the little dragon pawed at the ground and blasted Toothless. He opened his mouth, the gas hiss came, and Toothless fired a tiny flame straight into its mouth, causing the gas to backfire into the little dragon. It coughed up smoke and staggered away, looking ill. Hiccup laughed.

** "***Not so fireproof on the inside, are you?" Hiccup threw the hapless Terror his freshly cooked fish. "Here you go."

The appreciative little dragon gulped down the meal and approached Hiccup cautiously. He curled up next to him. Hiccup was amazed.

"*Everything we know about you guys is wrong." Hiccup carefully petted him... sending the Terror into an immediate, blissful sleep. Hiccup looked up as a branch cracked. And he screamed.

There stood the Banshee, looking right at him. The Terror's squeaked and ran, except for the one next to Hiccup. He stumbled over to the Banshee and Hiccup stood, ready to mount Toothless. But instead of attacking the Terrible Terror, the Banshee leaned down and nuzzled his head. The other's Terror's ran forward and perched on the Banshee's back. The Bansheeseemed to smile at the action. Toothless, who had been growling, sniffed the air and relaxed. He walked over to the Banshee and grunted. The Banshee snorted.

"Toothless?" Hiccup said. Toothless ignored Hiccup, grumbling to the Banshee, who nodded, then walked forward. The book was right, the dragons movements were fluid and graceful. Why did he think of Kara? The dragon stopped in front of him and looked him in the eye. Hiccup... he knew those eyes. He remembered seeing them many times, whether they were filled with mirth or tears... they were Kara's eyes.

"K-Kara?" Hiccup stuttered. The dragon began to glow, and when the light cleared, Kara stood there with a blank look. But the eyes were the same, hopeful and a bit sad.

"Hiccup..." She said.

9. Chapter 9

"Hiccup..."

"You... you're the Banshee?!" Hiccup exclaimed. Kara cringed at his accusing tone and nodded. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"I was scared, no, terrified of what they'd do to me if your dad or any of the others found out!" Her eyes welled with tears. "You don't understand, I'm a freak and they'd kill me."

"But you didn't trust me?" Hiccup said, sounding hurt. Kara let out an exasperated huff.

"What was I supposed to do?!" She asked.

"Tell me!" Hiccup yelled. She rubbed at her eyes.

"I was so scared Hiccup... I'm scared..." She admitted, falling to her knees and holding her face in her hands. Hiccup was frozen, unsure about what to do.

"She lied to me... but she had every right, if I was a Banshee I'd never tell anyone. Not even now..." Hiccup knelt across from the crying girl. "She trusts me though, doesn't she? I mean, she told me her biggest secret... And... she's always protected me, and helped me..."

"Kara?" Hiccup said. She looked up with a sniffle, hands falling from her face.

"There she goes again! Ready to put off her own problems to help me..."

"Stop doing that." Hiccup said. Kara looked confused.

"Stop doing what?"

"**That.** You keep putting off your problems to help me, and it's... it's not good for you."

"I know what is and isn't good for me." Kara replied with a frown.

"Not when it comes to me!" Hiccup said. "Whether it's good or not, you put yourself to the side to make sure I'm okay. Stop it!"

"What are you saying..." Kara said.

"That it's time for you to stop babysitting me, and worrying about what I'm feeling. How long have you been a dragon?" Hiccup asked.

"My whole life." Kara admitted.

"Son of a beiskaldi, Kara!" Hiccup exclaimed, shocking the girl. "You've been keeping this shut up for 15 years?!"

"Technically 13. I came to your tribe when I was two, remember?" Kara reminded him.

"Oh shut up." Hiccup said. Kara pursed her lips. Hiccup sighed. "I still can't believe you never told me."

"I told you now because now I know for sure that you won't slit my throat. Or make your dad slit my throat..." Kara admitted. Hiccup grabbed her hand and she looked him in the eye.

"I don't care what you are, you're still Kara." Hiccup said. Kara leaned forward and pressed their lips together. And then they were both taken out by a swarm of squeaking Terror's. They laughed.

* * *

><p>Hiccup was lost in thought, his head laid of a desk full of Toothless drawings. Kara sat next to him, her head leaned on his shoulder. Suddenly, Stoick appeared in the doorway. Hiccup jumped and quickly covered up his desk, a now wide awake Kara snapping to attention and sitting on the desk.<p>

"Dad! You're back!" He skirted the bench, blocking Stoick's view of Toothless, the prosthetic fin, and other drawings. "Gobber's not here, so..."

He struck an awkwardly casual pose, trying to cover up as much as possible. Kara helped out, gathering papers and putting them away.

"I know. I came looking for you." Stoick said.

"You did?" Hiccup asked, nervous.

"You've been keeping secrets." Stoick said. Hiccup's legs gave out. He slid, dragging the remaining table contents with him.

"I...have?" Hiccup stuttered.

"Just how long did you think you could hide it from me?" Stoick asked.

"I don't know what you're..."

"Nothing happens on this island without me hearing about it."

"Oh?" Hiccup said, glancing to meet Kara's eyes.

"So. Let's talk about that dragon. Blood drains from Hiccup's face."

"Oh gods. Dad I'm so sorry. I was going to tell you. I just didn't know how to-" Stoick started laughing. Hiccup stared, baffled.

"You're not...upset?"

"What?! I was hoping for this!" Stoick boomed.

"Uh...you were?"

"And believe me, it only gets better! Just wait til you spill a Nadder's guts for the first time. And mount your first Gronckle head on a spear. What a feeling!" Stoick laughs and smacks Hiccup on the

shoulder, sending him into the wall. Hiccup got back up, grimacing in the irony of it all. "You really had me going there, son. All those years of the worst Viking Berk has ever seen! Odin, it was rough. I almost gave up on you! And all the while, you were holding out on me! Thor almighty!"

Stoick grabbed a stool and sits. His massive frame nearly filled the tiny room.

"Ahhhhh. With you doing so well in the ring, we finally have something to talk about." Stoick said. There was a pregnant pause. Hiccup averted his eyes nervously. Stoick adjusted, awkwardly clearing his throat. After a long, uncomfortable silence...

"Oh, I... brought you something." He presented a horned helmet. "To keep you safe in the ring."

"Wow. Thanks. Hiccup accepts it, looking it over." Hiccup said sincerely.

"Your mother would've wanted you to have it. It's half of her breast plate." Stoick tapped his own helmet and smiled. "Matching set. Keeps her close, y'know. Wear it proudly. You deserve it. You've held up your end of the deal."

Stoick beamed with pride. Hiccup squirmed. He forced a yawn.

"I should really get to bed." Hiccup said.

"Yes! Good! Okay. Good talk. See you back at the house. We should do this again. I'm Great. Thanks for stopping glad I stopped by, I hope you by. And for the... the uh, like the hat. breast hat." They said, talking over each other to the point that their sentences garbled together.

"Well..uh..good night. To you too, Kara." Stoick left the room awkwardly, leaving Hiccup looking more burdened than ever. Kara grabbed his shoulders and he leaned against the desk where she sat with a heavy sigh.

"What am I going to do?" He groaned, covering his face. Kara hugged his shoulders.

"I don't know... We'll think of something."

10. Chapter 10

Kara looked up as another person entered the cove and she hid, glaring out from under the branches and leaves. It wasn't Hiccup, she knew him well. It was Astrid.

"... leaving. We're leaving. Let's pack up. Looks like you and me are taking a little vacation, forever." Toothless was nowhere in sight. Hiccup set down his basket and opened it up, his head clouded with troubles. "Oh..man..."

Hiccup looked up to the sound of Astrid, sitting on the rock right in front of him, sharpening her axe.

"Aggh! What the- What are you doing here?" She hopped off the rock and back him down, spinning her axe threateningly. Hiccup's eyes darted around nervously, searching for Toothless. He found Kara's eye instead, and she nodded. She emerged from the bushes and crept forward, silent.

"I want to know what's going on. No one just gets as good as you do. Especially you. Start talking! Are you training with someone?"

"Uh...training?" She grabbed him by his odd-looking harness.

"It better not involve... this." She said. She was too distracted to notice the glowing behind her.

"I know this looks really bad, but you see...this is, uh..." They heard a rustle coming from the other side of the cove. Astrid dropped Hiccup to the ground and set off to investigate. "You're right! You're right. I'm through with the lies. I've been making... outfits. So you got me. It's time everyone knew. Drag me back. Go ahead. Here we go."

He put her hand back on his harness, getting her to 'drag him back.' Astrid bent Hiccups hand backwards, driving him down.

"AAAAUUGGGHHH! Why would you do that?!" He yelled.

"That's for the lies." Astrid pounced the hilt of her axe off of Hiccup's laid-out body. *****And **that's** for everything else."

Hiccup's yelp was answered with growls, coming from the other side of the cove. Astrid looked up to see... A Night Fury and a Banshee. Toothless pounced toward them, snarling.

"Oh man." Hiccup said. Astrid dove onto Hiccup.

"Get down! Run! Run!" Astrid pulled her axe, ready to take on Toothless.

"No!" Hiccup knocked Astrid's cocked axe to the ground, out of reach, then stopped Toothless short of crushing her. "No. It's okay! It's okay..."

Toothless pulled up short and landed hard, spraying Astrid with sand.

"She's a friend." Toothless snorted in disagreement, and Kara snorted in general. The graceful dragon walked forward and looked Astrid over. Astrid was frozen. Toothless looked from her to Hiccup and back to her, confused. Hiccup looked to Astrid. "You just scared them."

"I scared them!?" Hiccup makes a shrugging motion. "Who is 'them'?"

"Astrid, Toothless. Toothless, Astrid. And that's... Hunter." Hiccup said, gesturing to the Banshee, who snorted. Astrid backed away, eyeing Hiccup and Toothless together with pure disgust. She turn and ran for the village.

"Duh da da, We're dead." Satisfied with Astrid's departure, Toothless turned away. "Where do you think you're going?"

* * *

><p>Astrid raced through the trees. A large shadow overtook her. 'Hunter' landed in front of her with a growl, cutting her off from the village. She was suddenly snatched into the air. Astrid screamed.<p>

** "***Oh great Odin's ghost, this is it!" Astrid yelled. Hiccup and Toothless flew Astrid to the top of a towering pine. It bowed and creaked under their weight as Astrid dangled a hundred feet in the air. "Hiccup! Get me down from here!"

"You have to give me a chance to explain."

"I'm not listening to anything you have to say!" Astrid screamed.

"Then I won't speak. Just let me show you." Hiccup extended a hand. "Please, Astrid."

She eyed him and the dragon, then the ground far, far below. After a moment, she swatted Hiccup's outstretched hand away and reluctantly climbed over the pedal, lines, and harness. She settled behind Hiccup, avoiding as much contact as possible.

"Now get me down." She said.

"Toothless? Down. Gently." Toothless leered mischievously. He spreaded his wings slowly. Toothless released the tree, tucked in his legs, and hovered in place. "See? Nothing to be afraid of."

Toothless suddenly launched straight upward. Astrid screamed. The acceleration was tremendous. Every downbeat bucks the saddle, heaving them into the sky, doubling their speed like a rocket. Astrid was thrown backward. She screamed and hugged Hiccup for dear life, squeezing the breath out of him.

** "***Toothless! What is wrong with you?! Bad dragon! He's not usually like this. Oh no..." Toothless rolled and plummeted toward the coastline far below. Astrid screamed. Toothless rocketed over the ocean waves, deliberately dipping them in the froth. "Toothless, what are you doing?! We need her to like us!"

Toothless rocketed skyward and began tumbling head over tail.

"And now the spinning. Thank you for nothing you useless reptile." Astrid clamped her hand over her eyes.

"Okay! I'm sorry! I'm sorry! Just get me off of this thing." Astrid was defeated, her aggressive energy gone. Satisfied, Toothless relented. They leveled off and headed up into the clouds. Kara met up with them, snorting to Toothless who seemed to laugh. Astrid opened her eyes again, and looked out over a world she'd never dreamed of. She reached out and touches clouds, pierced columns ablaze in golden hues, and floated over a vast, alien sky- scape. Her terror was

replaced by wonder. She grinned, despite herself. Toothless rose above a blanket of clouds and leveled off under a starry sky. They emerged from a blanket of clouds under the dancing Northern Lights, shimmering in ribbons across the vast sky. Below them, Berk's torches flickered in the inky darkness. The new perspective was breathtaking. Astrid tucked her arms into Hiccup's vest, burying her chin into his shoulder. Hiccup smiled nervously, glancing at Kara with a 'what do I do?!' expression. Toothless climbed past Berk's tallest peaks and headed out over open water, leaving the village lights behind them.

11. Chapter 11

"Alright I admit it. This is pretty cool. It's... amazing. He's amazing." Astrid carefully reached down and patted Toothless' side.

"So what now?" Hiccup groaned. It was a problem without an answer. "Hiccup, your final exam is tomorrow. You know you're going to have to kill... kill a dragon."

"Don't remind me." A strange, unearthly din approached. Toothless' ear plates suddenly stood on end. Panicked, he abruptly dove, dipping into cloud cover. "Toothless! What's happening? What is it?"

Toothless barked at him. 'Quiet!' Suddenly, out of the dense cloud, a Monstrous Nightmare emerged. Kara hissed and ducked closer to Toothless, flying directly overhead.

"Get down!" Hiccup whispered to Astrid. Hiccup and Astrid ducked. The Nightmare called out. A Zippleback appeared to the other side of Toothless, boxing him in.

"What's going on?" Astrid asked quietly.

"I don't know. Toothless. You've got to get us out of here, bud." Toothless and Kara hissed. Other dragons, previously invisible in the thick clouds, appeared all around them. Hundreds of them, all carrying fish and game in their talons. "It looks like they're hauling in their kill."

The Zippleback eyed them ravenously.

"What does that make us?" Astrid asked. The dragons banked and dove in formation, plummeting through the thickening fog and weaving between towering, craggy sea stacks. They emerged at the base of a massive volcanic caldera, glowing with rivulets of lava. The flock of dragons fell into rank, funneling through a crack, and zipping through a winding tunnel. It gave way to a vast, steamy inner chamber, tiered with pocky shelves. Dragons of all breeds laid about, nested in hordes. The arriving dragons flew in, dropping the fish and game into a central pit, glowing red and shrouded in mist. Hiccup was amazed.

"What my dad wouldn't give to find this." Hiccup said, awed. Toothless and Kara peeled away from the procession, landing on a small shadowy shelf to keep a low-profile. Hiccup and Astrid peeked around, taking in the busy hive of sorts. They watched as the food

continued to be dropped into the pit. "It's satisfying to know that all of our food has been dumped down a hole."

"They're not eating any of it." Astrid added.

Last to arrive was a dim-witted Gronckle. It hovered over the pit and regurgitated his paltry contribution - a pathetic little fish. As it fell into the steamy pit, a terrible roar rang out. The Gronckle tried to flee, but before it could, a gargantuan dragon head jutted from the steamy pit and snapped it out of the air, swallowing it back whole. Hiccup and Astrid recoiled, terrified.

"What is that?" The monstrous beast sniffed the air, seemingly aware of them. It neared the ledge where Toothless was hiding... and roared. Several dragons took flight in fear.

"Alright buddy, we gotta get out of here. Now!" Hiccup yelled. Toothless took flight, barely evading the monster's snapping jaws. The behemoth dragon lunged for them, snatching a Zippleback out of the air instead. Toothless disappeared into the winged exodus as thousands of dragons flee the caldera in fear.

"Wait, where is-" Hiccup cut off as he heard a screaming cry. Toothless snorted as Kara shot past.

* * *

><p>Toothless glided into the cove and touched down on the moonlit beach. Astrid, her mind reeling, was talking Hiccup's ear off.<p>

"No, no, it totally makes sense. It's like a giant beehive. They're the workers... and that's their queen. It controls them." She leapt off of Toothless and ran toward the village. "Let's find your dad."

"No, no! Not yet. They'll... kill Toothless and Hunter." He paused, meeting Astrid's eyes with a firm look.

Astrid, we have to think this through carefully. Astrid eyes him, incredulous.

"Hiccup, we just discovered the dragons' nest...the thing we've been after since Vikings first sailed here. And you want to keep it a secret? To protect your pet dragons? Are you serious?" Hiccup stood firm, resolute.

"Yes." He said. Astrid was taken aback.

"Okay. Then what do we do?"

"Just give me until tomorrow. Kara and I will figure something out." Hiccup said.

"Kara knows too?"

"Yeah."

"Okay." Astrid punched Hiccup in the arm. "That's for kidnapping me."

Hiccup looked to Toothless for support. Toothless snorted, dismissive. Astrid grabbed him. He braced for another hit. She kissed Hiccup on the cheek.

"That's for, everything else." In the awkward wake of the moment, Astrid hurried off... into Kara.

"Oh, hey Astrid. Almost didn't see you there kissing my boyfriend." Kara said, smirking. Astrid's eyes widened and she looked back to Hiccup, who shrugged with a 'whoops' look, then ran off again. Kara laughed. "That was fun."

"Kara, what are we going to do?" Hiccup asked, falling back to sit on a rock and covering his face with his hands. Kara sat behind him and rubbed his back.

"You do what you feel is right, and I'll be right behind you." Kara said.

"To what, protect me? It's not me I'm worried about." Hiccup said, leaning back to look her in the eye. Kara smiled softly and leaned down to kiss his forehead.

"That's sweet of you, but I'll be fine. You know me, I can kill anything."

"But can you eliminate a threat without killing them?" Hiccup asked. Kara sighed.

"I'll do my best. But if you're in danger, that goes out the window. Deal?" She asked, holding up her pinkie finger. Hiccup smiled and hooked her pinkie finger with his.

"Deal."

12. Chapter 12

The grounds had been transformed. Banners and flags flapped in the morning sun. Surrounding the ring, a festive crowd had gathered. All of Berk had turned up for the event.

****Well, I can show my face in public again." There was laughter and applause. "If someone had told me that in a few short weeks, Hiccup would go from being, well... Hiccup, to placing first in dragon training... I would've tied him to a mast and shipped him off for fear he'd gone mad. Yes! And you know it! But here we are. And no one's more surprised..." Kara and Hiccup stood at the entrance to the ring, listening, looking burdened.

"... or more proud than I am. Today, my boy becomes a Viking. **Today, he becomes one of us**!" cheers and roars. Astrid approached Hiccup and Kara, some what awkwardly.

"Be careful with that dragon." She said.

"It's not the dragon I'm worried about." Hiccup said, looking at the crowd.

"What are you going to do?" Astrid asked, worried.

"Put an end to this." She eyed him, dubious.

"I have to try. Kara... If something goes wrong... just make sure they don't find Toothless." Kara grabbed him into a hug. "Make sure they don't find you."

****I will." Kara whispered.

"Just promise us it won't go wrong." Astrid added. Hiccup couldn't. Gobber approached.

"It's time, Hiccup. Knock him dead." Hiccup put his helmet on and entered the ring. Kara looked to the teens, hooting and hollering from the stands.

"Show 'em how it's done, my man!" Tuff yelled. Hiccup locked eyes with Stoick. Stoick nodded with a smile. Hiccup returned a half-smile and took a deep breath. He hoisted a shield onto his forearm and selected his weapon from a rack of many - a small dagger.

Hrmph. I would've gone for the hammer." Stoick murmured. Hiccup turned to face a bolted, heavy door and glance to Kara. She nodded, letting him know that it was going to be okay, that she was right there for him. He took a deep breath.

"I'm ready." He said. The door bolt was raised. The crowd grew quiet...

The doors blasted open with a stream of sticky fire... Followed by a Monstrous Nightmare, coated in flames. It tore out of its cave like an irate bull - as the crowd roared and jeered. It climbed the walls and chain enclosure like a bat, hissing at the provoking crowd and blasting fire.

It spots Hiccup and descends, leering and licking the flaming drool from its lips. The crowd grows silent, bracing for the big fight. With the Monstrous Nightmare's eyes locked upon him, Hiccup deliberately drops his shield and dagger stepping away from them. The dragon pauses, confused. ON STOICK, also confused.

"What is he doing?" Stoick asked. The dragon pressed closer, snorting. Hiccup extended his open hand. It snarled.

"It's okay. It's okay." The dragon continued to pace, focused on... Hiccup's helmet. Hiccup realized, then reached up and removed it. Taking a breath to acknowledge the point of no return, he tossed the helmet aside. It hit the ground. ****I'm not one of them."

Gasps and murmurs raced through the crowd. All eyes turned to Stoick. He was welling with upset. Hiccup avoided Stoick's glare and remained focused on the Nightmare, holding his hand out. It paced around him, calming down.

"Stop the fight." Stoick announced.

"No. I need you all to see this." The crowd grew restless. "They're not what we think they are. We don't have to kill them."

"**I said stop the** **fight!**" Stoick whacked his hammer against the iron enclosure, rattling the arena with a terrible reverberating clatter. Spooked, the Nightmare snapped at Hiccup's outstretched hand. Hiccup yelped and sprung backward. The spell was broken. The Nightmare reacted to Hiccup's sudden movements and blasted another stream of fire. Hiccup screamed and barely dove out of reach. Hiccup scrambled around the ring. The Nightmare pursued, snapping and springing from ground to wall. Stoick pushed through the crowd, rushing to the doorway.

"Out of my way!" He yelled. Kara ran... **away** from the arena. She hid and she caught her breath before focusing on changing. But then she realized something. They'd take her away from Hiccup if she went in as a dragon. She would be breaking her promise to Hiccup. So she summoned all her strength... and screamed.

* * *

><p>Stoick wrenched the grated door to the arena and jumped through. The Monstrous Nightmare was only a few feet behind Hiccup. Astrid was now in the ring.<p>

"Hiccup!" She picked up a hammer and hurled it at the Monstrous Nightmare, hitting it in the head. It turned its attention to Astrid, and began chasing her. Stoick raised the arena gate, waving her toward it.

"This way!" Astrid made it through, but the Nightmare blasted the doorway, cutting Hiccup off. It pounced on him and prepared to finish him off. Suddenly, a terrible roar and a gut-wrenching scream, the scream of a Banshee, pierced the din. The Nightmare shook its head and backed off, eyes watering

"Night Fury! Get down!" Toothless bounded over the crowd and blasted a hole through the chain enclosure. He flew through it and disappeared in the boiling smoke. The Vikings rush to railings... in time to see a flurry of wings cutting through the dissipating smoke. And in time to see Kara slip through the chains. Toothless and the Nightmare tumbled into the clear, locked in a toothy, vicious fight. Toothless kicked the Nightmare off and planted himself between Hiccup and it. Kara stood next to him, snarling, ready to scream again if necessary. The Nightmare snarled, circling them. Toothless lunged and Kara screamed... causing the Nightmare to relent and back away. To everyone's shock and horror, Hiccup got to his feet and grabbed Toothless protectively. Kara stood between the dragon, holding the Nightmare off with short screams every time it drew closer.

"Alright, Toothless, go. Get out of here!" Hiccup pleaded. The crowd was gob-smacked, growing livid.

"Night Fury!" They yelled. Hiccup tried to shoo Toothless away in vain. Vikings began pouring in, clambering through the enclosure and dropping into the ring.

** "***Go! **Go**!" Hiccup yelled.

"Take it alive!" The vikings yelled. Stoick grabbed an axe and charged into the arena. Kara called out to him, panicked.

"Stoick no!" Kara exclaimed.

"Dad! No! He won't hurt you!" Hiccup explained. The other Vikings surrounded and attacked Toothless. He tossed them aside like rag dolls, his eyes focused on Stoick. "No, don't! You're only making it worse!"

Stoick raised his hammer as he charged for Toothless. Toothless ducked and pounced on him. They tumbled end over end.

"Toothless! **Stop**!" He pinned Stoick and inhaled. The familiar hiss of gas built. Everyone braced... "***No!***"

Toothless swallowed back the blast and turned to Hiccup, not understanding.

"Get him!" The crowd rushed him, piling on, and taking Toothless down. Astrid held Hiccup back. But Kara ran forward, throwing people away from Toothless. She protected him, shoving people away, knocking them out, doing everything she could to save the dragon from captivity, or worse, death.

"No! Please...just don't hurt him. Please don't hurt him." Hiccup cried. Stoick got to his feet, fuming, shaken. A Viking presented Stoick with an axe. He eyed Toothless a moment, then pushed the axe back into the Viking's hands.

"Put it with the others!" His burning glare turned to Hiccup and Kara.

13. Chapter 13

Hiccup and Kara were shoved into the dank, dimmed hall. The massive doors rattled and echoed as Stoick slammed them. Stoick pushed past Hiccup. He paced against a backdrop of shadowy tapestries and carved pillars - a legacy of heroes, all peering down in angered judgement.

"I should have known. I should have seen the signs."

"Dad-"

"**We had a deal**!" Stoick paused to say something, but stopped short. He snorted and resumed pacing, repeating the cycle.

"I know we did... but that was before... uhhh, it's all so messed up." Hiccup said. Kara moved to his side.

"So everything in the ring. A trick? A lie?" He stomped toward Hiccup. At Kara's warning look, he stopped short. He pointed, fighting back words.

** "***I screwed up. I should have told you before now. Take this out on me, be mad at me, but please... just don't hurt Toothless." Hiccup pleaded.

The dragon? That's what you're worried about? Not the people you almost killed?!

** "***He was just protecting me! He's not dangerous."

"They've killed **hundreds of** **us**!"

** "*** And we've killed **thousands of them**! They defend themselves, that's all! They raid us because they have to! If they don't bring enough food back, they'll be eaten themselves. There's something else on their island dad...it's a dragon like-"

"-Their island?" Stoick repeated. He stomped back, pointing an accusing finger. "So you've been to the nest."

"Did I say nest?" Hiccup went silent - he said too much.

"How did you find it?!"

"No... I didn't. Toothless did. Only a dragon can find the island." Stoick glared. A moment passed, then an idea took form on his face. His eyes flared. Hiccup watched, realizing. Stoick stomped toward the doorway. Hiccup chased after him, panicked. ****"Oh no. No, Dad. No. Dad. It's not what you think. You don't know what you're up against. It's like nothing you've ever seen."

He grabbed Stoick by the arm, tugging with all his might. He had no effect whatsoever.

"Dad. Please. I promise you that you can't win this one." Nothing.

"No. Dad. No. For once in your life, ** WOULD YOU PLEASE JUST LISTEN TO ** ** ME?!**"

Stoick swatted Hiccup off of him, throwing him to the floor. Icy stillness. Hiccup stared back, stunned. Kara restrained herself from killing the large viking then and there.

"You've thrown your lot in with them. You're not a Viking. You're **not my son**." He turned and walked away. "Kara, come."

"No." She said bluntly. Both vikings turned to her, shocked.

"What?" Stoick snapped.

"You don't own me. I refuse to come. I refuse to kill any more dragons." Kara said. Stoick scoffed and turned to walk away.

"You're just as pathetic as him then."

"You say dragons are monsters, when it's really you that's the monster." Stoick paused, stung, then pushed through the door, leaving Hiccup devastated.

****"Ready the ships!" Stoick called.

* * *

><p>Broken-down catapults and trebuchets were bundled up and lowered from the cliffs. Below on the docks, Vikings loaded the heavy artillery into the hulls of awaiting ships. Children and the elderly gathered to on the walkways to wave apprehensive farewells to the departing warriors. Lastly, Toothless was loaded aboard Stoick's ship, chained down to a palette, muzzled, and restrained with a

weighty neck ring. He looked exhausted, miserable.<p>

Stoick crossed to the bow as the ship pushed off and joined the amassed armada of ships adrift in the harbor. Stoick's brow was furrowed, all warmth drained away. He turned west and glared at the horizon with cold determination.

** "***Set sail! We head for Helheim's Gate." He then notices Hiccup and Kara watching from their familiar cliff-side perch beyond the village. Their eyes meet, full of hurt and regret. Hiccup slowly shook his head in warning. Stoick broke the stare and turned to Toothless, fuming.

** "*** Lead us home, Devil." Stoick said. Hiccup watched, powerless to stop what was happening, but he wouldn't leave.

* * *

><p>Hiccup was still standing there. The ships had cleared the horizon. Astrid and Kara stood behind him. Kara walked next to him and took his hand. He glanced to her, then stared out over the water again. Astrid approached cautiously and stood beside him in silence.<p>

"It's a mess." Hiccup doesn't respond. "You must feel horrible. You've lost everything. Your father, your tribe, your best friend."

"Thank you for summing that up." Hiccup said sarcastically. "Why couldn't I have killed that dragon when I found him in the woods. It would have been better for everyone."

"Yep. The rest of us would have done it. So why didn't you?" Hiccup just shook his head - he really didn't know. Astrid's eyes glimmered. She wanted something. "Why didn't you?"

"I don't know. I couldn't." Hiccup said.

"That's not an answer." Astrid said. Hiccup was becoming irated. "Why is this so important to you all of a sudden?"

"Because I want to remember what you say right now." Astrid said.

"Oh for the love of - I was a coward! I was weak. I wouldn't kill a dragon." Hiccup said, loud, angry.

"You said 'wouldn't' that time." Astrid noted.

***"Whatever! I wouldn't! Three hundred years and I'm the first Viking who wouldn't kill a dragon!" Hiccup yelled, blowing up at the viking girl.

"First to ride one, though." Kara said, finally speaking. Hiccup blinked at her in surprise. He had never looked at it that way before. "So..."

"...I wouldn't kill him because he looked as frightened as I was." Hiccup said, coming to realize something. "I looked at him and I saw myself."

"I bet he's really frightened now." Astrid said, turning to face the open sea. "What are you going to do about it?"

"Probably something stupid." Hiccup said.

"Good. But you've already done that." Kara teased.

"Then something crazy." Astrid and Kara smiled as he ran off.

"That's more like it." Kara said, chasing after Hiccup with a laugh.

14. Chapter 14

Kara raised the bolt on the Monstrous Nightmare's pen.

"If you're planning on getting eaten, I'd definitely go with the Gronckle." Fishlegs said. Hiccup turned to see his fellow recruits, watching him with folded arms. Tuffnut stepped forward with a scowl.

"You were wise to seek help from the world's most deadly weapon." Tuffnut said proudly. He looked to the others. "It's me."

"You wish." Kara said, smirking devilishly. They were surprised at the sight of her razor sharp teeth. Why hadn't they noticed before?

"I love this plan." Snotlout said.

"I didn't..." Hiccup trailed off.

"You're crazy." She smirked, sultry. "I like that."

Kara grabbed her forehead and pushed her back.

"So? What is the plan?" Kara asked, grabbing his hand supportively. Hiccup smiles, glowing in the support of his friends.

* * *

><p>Hiccup stepped back from the door, drawing the Monstrous Nightmare out of its cave. It snorted, stepping into the ring, calmed by Hiccup's outstretched hand - focused on him. The teens were bewildered, awed. Snotlout nervously reached for a spear laying near his foot. Kara stopped him.<p>

"Uh-uh." Kara said, kicking it far from his reach. Hiccup slowed to a stop in front of the teens, with the Nightmare inches from his outstretched hand. He reached over and grabbed Snotlout's trembling hand.

"Wait! What are you..."

"Relax. It's okay... it's okay." Hiccup replaced his outstretched hand with Snotlout's, putting him in control of the massive beast. The Nightmare snorted, but remained calm. Snotlout, by contrast,

chuckled nervously - it was at once terrifying and amazing. The others watched, spellbound. Hiccup turned and walked away.

"Where are you going?!" Snotlout yelled. Hiccup pulled a bundle of rope from a supply box.

"You're going to need something to help you hold on." The teens eyed each other apprehensively, and looked up to reveal... All the dragons standing in the ring, facing the teens expectantly.

"Hey, what about you and Kara?" Astrid asked. "Toothless isn't here so..."

"Don't worry about it, I've got it covered." Kara said. Hiccup looked to her, shocked.

"Are you really going to?" He asked. She grinned.

"They would've found out eventually." She said. She backed away from the others and closed her eyes. Her tattoo's began to glow and detached, swirling around her. When the light cleared, Kara roared, a mighty Banshee once more. Hiccup grinned and mounted, holding onto her neck tightly. The others stared, shocked.

"Yeah, my girlfriends a dragon. Let's go!"

* * *

><p>Hiccup saw the gargantuan dragon firing up to blast his father, and frowned.<p>

"Kara, I wish you could talk right now." He said. She purred in response, trying to comfort him.

The Red Death remained focused on Stoick - this is it. It reared back and inhaled. Gas began to amass, when... **BAM**! A blast exploded against the back of The Red Death's head. It turned distracted, as... a Nadder and a Banshee punched through the flames, banking across the sky. Followed by a Monstrous Nightmare, a Zippleback, and a Gronckle. They rolled in unison, revealing the recruits riding on their backs. Hiccup led on Kara, with Astrid following close behind. Gobber and Stoick watched, slack-jawed, in awe.

"Ruff, Tuff, watch your backs! Move Fishlegs!" The monster shook off the blast and snapped in their wake. Hiccup directed his squadron out of harm's way. They climbed out of reach and circled each other.

"Look at us, we're on a dragon! We're on dragons, all of us!" Tuff laughed.

"Up, let's move it!" Hiccup ordered. The dragons climbed past the Red Death. Hiccup slid off Kara's back and onto Astrid's Nadder. On the ground, Gobber hobbled over to Stoick.

"Every bit the boar-headed, stubborn Viking you ever were." Stoick was speechless. "Wait, is that a Banshee?"

In the air, the group circled over the dragon's head.

"Fishlegs, break it down." Hiccup said.

"Okay. Heavily armored skull and tail made for bashing and crushing. Steer clear of both. Small eyes, large nostrils. Relies on hearing and smell." Fishlegs reported.

"Okay. Lout, Legs, hang in its blind spot. Make some noise, keep it confused. Kara, help out with your screams. Ruff, Tuff, find out if it has a shot limit. Make it mad." Hiccup said.

"That's my specialty."

"Since when? Everyone knows I'm more irritating. See." He began making irritating sounds. Kara snorted.**
>

"Just do what I told you. I'll be back as soon as I can." Hiccup said.

"Don't worry, we got it covered!"

"Yeah!" Hiccup and Astrid peeled away. The teens banked and dove toward the monster, splitting up. The Twins raced alongside the monster's head, taunting it.

"Troll!" Tuff sneered.

"Butt Elf!" Ruff yelled.

"Bride of Grendel!" The Red Death unloaded a spray of fire at the twins. They barely dodged it. Fishlegs and Snotlout hung behind its eyes, banging away at their shields, making a racket. The Red Death opened all six of its eyes, spotting them.

"Uh, this thing doesn't have a blind spot." Fishlegs said nervously. Kara landed on its head and began glowing. But she only transformed halfway. She was covered head to toe in scales. Her skin underneath was black. She tied her hair back and stretched her wings.

"Then make one." She said.

* * *

><p>Hiccup and Astrid were searching for Toothless. Hiccup spotted him among the burning ships.<p>

"There!" He steered the Nadder over the deck and handed Astrid the reins. He lined up his jump... and hopped off, guarding his face from the flames. He landed on the burning deck. "Go help the others!"

She and the Nadder took off. Hiccup fought his way to Toothless. He unbuckled the muzzle. Toothless shrieked.

"Okay, hold on. Hold on." He went to work on the chains.

* * *

><p>Kara hovered over the massive dragons head, shouting to Snotlout and Fishlegs.<p>

"Make some noise!" She called. They clanged their weapons against their shields, making the monster wince.

** "***It's working." The huge beast starts to sway its head dizzily.

"Yeah! It's working. The noise was also confusing the Gronckle and the Monstrous Nightmare. Both dragons lost their bearings. The Red Death thrashed, knocking Snotlout off of his dragon and onto the monster's gigantic head. Snotlout bounced across the top and came to a stop just shy of the hundred foot drop.

****Agghh!" He yelled. Kara grabbed him and pulled him onto its head. Fishlegs' Gronckle went down in a spin of confusion.

"I've lost power on the Gronckle. Snotlout! Kara! Do something!" Fishlegs shouted. He hurled Snotlout his hammer. The Gronckle crashed and skidded to a stop...

"Ouch." Kara remarked, cringing at the sight.

"I'm okay!" ... then flipped over, crushing Fishlegs. "Less okay."

Snotlout eyed the Red Death's gigantic, veiny eyes. He raised the hammer...

"I can't miss!" He said... and hammered the monster's eyes, playing whack-a-mole. Kara began laughing. "What's wrong buddy, got something in your eye?"

Astrid flew by on her Nadder, catching Snotlout in all his heroics.

"Yeah! You're the Viking!" Snotlout grinned, finally vindicated in her eyes. In his distraction, he was thrown and landed heavily on one of the Red Death's spines - clinging precariously. A close call.

"Whoa!" He yelped. Kara helped him back up. Kara then clapped her hands over his ears and screamed. The Red Death blinked rapidly, shaking its head. Kara held Snotlout so he wouldn't fly off.

15. Chapter 15

The monster's tail swept across the burning ships, snapping masts like twigs. Hiccup continued working at the chains. He couldn't budge them. Fire licked at his clothes. He looked up to see... The Red Death blasting at the teens, enraged. The monster's giant foot crashed down, smashing the bow under its impressive weight. Hiccup and Toothless were thrown into the water in a maelstrom of burning planks and rigging.

Underwater, Hiccup swam toward Toothless. They were both caught in a mess of rigging, being dragged down. The heavy palette settled into the rocky bottom like an anchor. Toothless had stopped struggling. Hiccup took one more hopeless tug at the chains - he was almost out of air. Suddenly, a black hand grabbed Hiccup. Kara exploded to the surface, pulling Hiccup to the shoreline through flaming debris. She

laid him down, under the shelter of an overhanging rock.

"Dad..." Stoick dove into the water between flaming flotsam. Kara held Hiccup to her. There was stillness as the teens caught their breath. BOOM! In an explosion of sea water, Toothless landed on the shore, setting Stoick down and releasing him. Hiccup was awed. The ground rumbled underfoot. The monster screeched. Its massive claws stomped around in the smoke. Stoick gave way as Toothless mounted the rock and raised his wings. He turned to Hiccup and snorted -

'Let's go.'

"You got it, bud." Hiccup climbed onto Toothless and buckled himself in. Stoick grabbed his .

"I'm sorry...for everything." He said.

"Yeah...me too."

"You don't have to go up there."

"We're Vikings. It's an occupational hazard." They exchanged smiles.

"I'm proud to call you my son." Hiccup beamed, taken aback.

"Thanks dad." Stoick let go of Hiccup's arm. Kara pulled him into a kiss before Hiccup spurred Toothless on, charged with his father's belief in him. They rocketed into the sky as Stoick and Kara watched.

"So... are you two-"

"Not the time, Stoick." Kara said, smirking.

"And you're a dragon?" She took to the air.

* * *

><p>Astrid saw Toothless streaking through the sky, gaining altitude.<p>

"He's up!" She turned to Ruffnut and Tuffnut, who were arguing and throwing punches at each other. "Get Snotlout out of there!"

Mid punch, the twins looked over to see Snotlout stranded on the monster's head. They eyed each other.

"I'm on it!" They yelled in unison.

***"I'm on it first! I'm ahead of you." Tuff snapped. The twins spotted Snotlout on the giant dragon and steered their Zippleback in his direction.

"Hey! Let me drive!" Ruff yelled. The twins peeled off, arguing as they raced each other to the monster. Snotlout and Kara saw the Zippleback diving toward him and he dashed down the Red Death's head. He ran up the end of its horn... As the twins swept past, both missing him... but perfectly snatching him where the necks merged. Ruff and Tuff eyed each other, surprised and impressed.

****I can't believe that worked." Tuff laughed.

The Red Death spotted Astrid and inhaled, preparing to blast. She and her Nadder were caught in the suction, pulled toward the monster's gaping mouth.

* * *

><p>The Vikings watched with dread. They heard the familiar whir of the...<p>

"Night Fury! Get down!"

* * *

><p>A massive blast jolted the Red Death's head sideways. Astrid was thrown clear of its mouth... And her Nadder. She tumbled through the air. The ground raced toward her, when... She's suddenly caught by the leg. She looked up to see Kara.<p>

"Kara?" She grunted. They flew over the crowd of Vikings and Kara set Astrid down, mid-run. She circled back to reengage - a black speck against the clouds.

"Go." Astrid said, grinning. Kara met Toothless mid-air and she talked to Hiccup for a moment. She then rocketed back towards the vikings.

"Was that... Kara?" Gobber asked. Astrid only shrugged.

* * *

><p>Hiccup and Toothless rocketed past the Red Death's head and climbed, higher and higher.<p>

"That thing has wings!" Kara said, catching up with him.

"Okay, let's see if it can use them!" Hiccup said. Hiccup pulled Toothless into a turn. They plummeted, gaining tremendous speed. The wind buffeted them as they targeted the Red Death at super sonic speed. KABLAM! Toothless unloaded a fireball against the Red Death's head. It went down with a rumble as they climb anew.

* * *

><p>The Vikings shielded themselves from the dust of the fallen monster... as its wings unfolded and extended.<p>

* * *

><p>Hiccup looked back as they put distance between them.<p>

"Do you think that did it?" Hiccup asked. Suddenly, the enraged behemoth RISES into frame... flapping its wings furiously. A daunting sight.

"Well, he can fly." Kara remarked. The trio dove into the tangled sea stacks - they wove through the rock like rabbits through a briar. The Red Death snapped at them, but couldn't reach them. Hiccup, Kara, and

Toothless pulled ahead. The Red Death smashed through the canopy of rock and pulled in behind Toothless. He bursted through fifty-foot formations like they were saplings.

* * *

><p>Stoick, Gobber, and the Teens watch as The trio streaked past, weaving through sea stacks.<p>

"Woohoo! Yeah!" The teens cheered. A moment later the Red Death smashed the sea stacks to dust in hot pursuit. The Vikings mood was quenched.

* * *

><p>Hiccup and Toothless nor Kara could slow the monster down. Hiccup eyed the clouds above. An idea hit him. He locked eyes with Kara, then Toothless.<p>

"Okay Toothless, time to disappear." Toothless and Kara pulled into a steep climb, heading toward the clouds. "Come on bud!"

The Red Death followed, closing in fast. Kara heard the gas.

"Here it comes!" BLAST! They narrowly dodged a column of flame and smoke. They reached the low-hanging clouds and pierced them. The monster followed, immediately losing them in the hampered visibility. It roared irritably. From out of nowhere, Toothless and Kara dove at the huge dragon, blasting and puncturing a hole in its wing. The trio were gone again before the dragon can get a shot at them.

* * *

><p>The Vikings stared up at the sky, listening to the resounding booms and watching flashes light up the clouds. Gobber placed a hand on Stoick's shoulder.<p>

* * *

><p>The trio dove in again and again, using the clouds to hide and surprise as they punctured the monster's wings. It bellowed in frustration and whirled around, unleashing fire blindly, in all directions. Hiccup saw the glow of fire cutting towards them.<p>

"Watch out!" The random blast clipped Toothless' tail. It was heavily damaged. Kara, who had cried out, was examining her side. "Kara, go down. You need help **now**."

"I'm not leaving you." Kara said, but she winced as her side ached. Hiccup gave her a pointed look and she flew closer. "Be safe."

"Okay." He agreed. They kissed, and then Kara rocketed past the Red Death and to the gathering of vikings. "time's up. Let's see if this works."

He pulled Toothless into a turn. They flew directly into the Red Death's face, taunting it.

* * *

><p>Astrid helped patch up Kara's side after the girl became fully human again. She leaned on Stoick as she watched her boyfriend and his dragon battle the Red Death. Her eyes widened.<p>

They were dead in the air. The giant club tail clipped Toothless, tearing Hiccup from the harness and sending him tumbling against the backdrop of the fast-approaching fireball. Toothless struggled with all his might to reach the unconscious Hiccup. But the fireball swallowed them both.

The Vikings watched in horror as Hiccup and Toothless disappeared into the boiling inferno.

* * *

><p>A whiteout of ash. And through it came...<p>

"Hiccup? Hiccup!?" Stoick appeared, searching desperately, Kara at his side. Everything as scorched. Even the ground was smoking from the terrible heat. "Hiccup!? Son!?"

Through the ash, Kara spotted the motionless silhouette of Toothless.

"Hiccup." She breathed, grave. She hurried to the dragon's side with Stoick. Toothless was roughed up, but conscious. His scorched saddle, however, was vacant. Stoick looked to the sky in despair. He buckled at the knees, overwhelmed by the loss.

"Oh son...I did this..." He groaned. Astrid pushed through the crowd, her eyes welling up. Followed by Gobber. They flanked Stoick and Kara as they knelt, slumped over. Behind them, a ring of Vikings formed, keeping a respectful distance. As the dust and smoke cleared, a ring of wild dragons could also be seen, gathering just behind and between the Vikings. Toothless stirred and groggily rolled his head toward Stoick. Their eyes met. "I'm so sorry..."

Toothless unfolded his wings, revealing Hiccup, unconscious, clutched safely against his chest. Stoick's eyes widened and Kara let out a grateful sob.

"Hiccup." She said. Stoick scooped Hiccup into his arms, listened to his heart... And bursted into relieved laughter.

"He's alive!" Stoick exclaimed. Kara shifted so that she could touch Hiccup's face. "You brought him back alive!"

The crowd roared. Followed by the dragons. The Vikings looked around to find themselves surrounded. Stoick leaned close to Toothless, meeting him eye to eye.

"Thank you... for saving my son." Stoick said to Toothless. Gobber looked Hiccup up and down.

"Well, you know... most of him." Gobber said. Stoick glanced back at him. Gobber shrugged, redirecting their eyes toward...

16. Chapter 16

Hiccup was asleep, his head on a pillow. Healing scars were on his face showed that maybe a week or two had passed. Kara was sprawled next to him, exhausted from her injury. Toothless hovered over them, whining and grumbling impatiently. Hiccup stirred and opened his eyes.

"Oh, hey Toothless. Toothless excitedly nuzzled and nudged Hiccup. "Okay, okay! I'm happy to see you too, bud. Now just-"

Toothless stepped on his groin, causing Hiccup to sit bolt upright with a yelp. He looked around, confounded. He was in his bed, moved beside the fire pit on the main floor of his house. He saw Kara beside him, blushed, then continued looking around.

"I'm in my house. You're in my house." Toothless tore around the room, knocking things over, far too big for the space. "Uh...does my dad know you're in here?!"

Toothless paused at the foot of the bed, tongue wagging. He eyed the rafters... and leapt up onto them, brimming with 'happy dog' energy.

"Okay, okay - no Toothless! Aw, come on..." Hiccup shifted to get out of bed... then paused... sensing that something is wrong. He peeled back the covers slowly. What he saw startled, horrified, and overwhelmed him - all at once. His booted foot touched down... Followed by a mechanical prosthetic in place of his second leg. It was an ingenious spring-loaded replacement, made of wood and iron. Toothless landed by the bed and approached calmly, sniffing the new leg. He raised his eyes to meet Hiccup's, seemingly aware of what Hiccup was going through. Hiccup braced himself on the bedpost and tried to stand on it. He winced and stifled the pain...

"Okay...okay..." but stumbled with the first step. Toothless caught Hiccup's fall with his head... and slowly lifted him up, stabilizing him. "Thanks bud."

Hiccup leaned on him like a crutch. They took a few steps together. Their missing parts formed a poetic silhouette as they made their way toward the door. Hiccup pried it open, revealing a Monstrous Nightmare flapping outside the door. Hiccup yelped and slammed the door closed. He turned to Toothless, alarmed. Kara was startled awake by the commotion and sat upright, then cringed with the motion. She carefully got up and limped over, and hand on her stomach.

"Toothless? Stay here, bud. You too." He said, looking to Kara. Hiccup paused... and cracked the door open again. He peeked outside, his eyes widening. He allowed the door to swing open, revealing... ... the Monstrous Nightmare, carrying Snotlout on its back.

"Come on guys, get ready! Hold on tight! Here we go!" A class of newbie dragon riders followed him through the sky on a variety of dragons, pulling back the curtain on an amazing vista in which Vikings and dragons mull about by the dozen, basking on the rooftops, weaving along the plaza. No one seemed upset, there wasn't a sword in sight. Under the framework of a massive barn, a Nadder blasted fire

onto a metal brace. It stepped back to let a Viking hammer it into shape. Nearby, a Gronkle landed, carrying a tree trunk in his mouth. He showed a Viking what he'd found. The Viking patted his head. Another Viking backed a Zippleback into a stall to check it for size. Hiccup took a step outside, finding Stoick waiting for him on the step.

"I knew it. I'm dead." Hiccup said. Stoick laughed and Kara smirked.

"No, but you gave it your best shot." Kara teased. Stoick put his arm around Hiccup, steadying him. He gestured to the transformed village.

"So? What do you think?" Hiccup just shrugged, amazed. Below, the plaza, villagers took notice.

"Hey look! It's Hiccup!" They rushed over, surrounding him with a hero's welcome.

"Hiccup, how you doin' mate?"

"It's great to see you up and about."

"Turns out all we needed was a little more of..." He gestured non-specifically at Hiccup. "... this."

"You just gestured to all of me." Hiccup said, playing along with a happy smile.

"Well. Most of you." Gobber pushed through the crowd, beaming proudly. "That bit's my handiwork. With a little Hiccup flare thrown in. Think it'll do?"

"I might make a few tweaks." Astrid appeared and jabbed Hiccup in the arm. Hiccup recoils with a grumble.

"That's for scaring me."

"What, is it always going to be this way? Cause I..." Kara grabbed him aggressively and kissed him. Hoots and hollers followed. "... could get used to it."

Gobber presented Hiccup with a rebuilt saddle, rigging, and tail.

"Welcome home." Gobber said. Suddenly, Toothless pounced on the crowd, crushing several unsuspecting Vikings under his weight.

"Night Fury, get down!" A viking called, jokingly. Toothless eyed the new tail excitedly, tongue wagging. Amidst the groans and grumbles, Hiccup and Kara exchanged a sheepish grin.

* * *

><p>Hiccup's prosthetic foot snapped into the modified stirrup. The two pieces clicked together, forming a single shape. Astride Toothless, he was whole again. He rotated the pedal. The new tail opened. Bright red with a skull and Viking horns emblazoned on it.

Hiccup approved.<p>

Hiccup and Toothless were saddled up and ready to fly. Astrid backed her Nadder into position. Kara stood beside Hiccup, half dragon half human.

"You ready?" Hiccup asked Toothless. He snorted an excited 'yes!' From his mount, Hiccup looked out over the changed world.

"_This... is Berk. It snows nine months of the year... and hails the other three."_ They leapt into the bright blue sky, together as one. Kara and Astrid followed, giving chase.

"Any food that grows here is tough and tasteless. The people that grow here are even more so." Hiccup and Kara raced through the village - under eaves, over rooftops, down cliff-sides, and between ship masts. It was a high energy, romantic dance of sorts.

_"__The only upsides are the pets. While other places have...ponies or parrots, we have..."_ Their fellow recruits joined them as they took to the open sky, rocketing far above the village. The Northern sky swirled with blazing, multicolored dragons. Hiccup, Toothless, and Kara broke from the pack, spinning into the blinding sun.

"... dragons."

* * *

><p>That's all folks. Someone asked if I could continue into Riders of Berk so I'll just have to see about that. I have yet to watch any episodes so..._**

If I do, I'll post a new chapter about the new story.

Thanks for all your support.

Fin

End
file.